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HOUSING PROBLEMS IN SIKKDA GOVERNORATE EXAMINED

Algiers AL-SHA'B in Arabic 17 Nov 83 p 5

[Text] The [war of liberation] caused some truly wrenching events on the social level, especially in terms of man's relation to the land. This sacred link and affectionate bond between man and the land, a link that has been formed over centuries, was completely destroyed at the hands of the colonialists.

Through a policy of concentration and forced grouping together of the population, the phenomenon of shacks and tin houses emerged in this governorate. This is a feature that this governorate shares with the other governorates of the Constantine north and eastern Algerian in general, areas which experienced a policy of land burning and the forced concentration of the population.

This problem left by the colonialists led to uneven development between different parts of this governorate during the era of independence. For example, a huge gas liquefaction facility was built at the expense of other local development sectors.

In the governorate of Skikda, two-thirds of the total population live in housing that is unsanitary and unfit socially. This housing is either in the form of shacks, tin houses, or houses that are more like tin houses than the stone or clay houses which were found in the governorate historically. Nonetheless, until 1977 no more than 1,000 apartments had been built to handle the housing problems of one-half million people, most of whom came out of the revolution of liberation with no shelter. The real estate inheritance left by the colonialists included no more than 4,000 apartments, and some of these were dilapidated.

From independence until the eve of the launching of the five-year plan, not enough attention was devoted to this sector, despite the terrible effect it had on the lives of the population, especially in the countryside.

In the area socialist villages, it was decided in the early 1970's to build 5 socialist villages in the governorate that would include nearly 500 apartments. However, to this moment, these villages have not been completed.

The village of Medjaz Dechiche in el-Harrouche jurisdiction was planned in 1974 to include 150 apartments. They have not yet been finished. Only 120 have been completed and the others are in the process of being completed. This has taken 9 years!

The village of el-Qoll includes 120 apartments which were begun in 1975. A number of different builders have worked on the apartments. They were completed with some difficulty this year.

The rural village of Qarbaz is still in the process of being built, even though it was the first village in the governorate to begin construction. The farmers have gradually moved in rather than waiting because completion of the village has taken a tenth of a century.

The socialist village of Shbikiyah Malilah at the Sharshar well in 'Uzabah jurisdiction was begun in 1977 and includes 200 apartments. The first half was built by traditional construction methods and the second half was built with prefabricated materials. This has taken 7 years. Unfortunately, there is no room here for a discussion about quality. The village is located over a fresh water well, yet none of the faucets work. However, the yards are irrigated as they should be. This is attributable to the fact that completion of the village was reasonably delayed by only 3 years. The project was reevaluated twice and the construction was done by a number of local organizations. In addition to this, there are efforts in the field of do-it-yourself construction in the countryside. These, however, are insignificant in view of the size of the colonialist legacy on the one hand, and the urgent need for housing on the other.

The principle reason for the delay in the construction of these villages is attributable to the fact that the contracts for completion of the village included private, regional and governorate contracts. In this situation, the contracted and contracting parties for the project were one and the same. For this reason, deadlines were not respected and obstacles were not overcome. This caused unusual delays in the completion of these projects.

The five-year plan is considered to be the beginning of the operation to correct the course of development in the governorate, particularly in the field of housing. However, the absence or weakness of local construction capabilities may hamper these construction efforts, whether on the level of research or on the level of actual execution. The governorate of Skikda suffers from an acute shortage of local construction capabilities. The national research offices have conducted about 70 percent of all the development programs in the governorate, and more than 90 percent of the projects in the housing sector. Foreign consulting firms have also participated in the study of projects for the governorate.

The governorate only has two offices to conduct studies, and these are still being built and staffed. This deficiency in terms of research capability could lead to grave errors that would delay the execution of a number of projects for years. Also, the research problem has contributed to the increase

in construction costs, the extension of completion deadlines, and the necessity of reevaluating projects more than twice in most cases.

The nation's private sector has also participated in carrying out some studies, but private sector offices are located either in the capital or in Constantine.

The private sector's role is not limited to conducting studies, but extends to the execution of projects as well. Of all the modern housing programs in the governorate, 70 percent are executed by national or regional organizations. The remaining 30 percent are executed by the private sector or the few local and foreign organizations, including an Italian company that went bankrupt due to a technical mistake in research and a miscalculation of market conditions. There is another foreign company that is building a significant number of houses using prefabricated materials as part of a rush housing program. There are also companies that left the governorate and abandoned incomplete buildings. The situation [with these buildings] has not been corrected despite the passage of 6 years.

Eighty percent of the private sector contractors working in the governorate of Skikda are from other governorates, such as the governorates of Batna or Constantine.

This means that the shortage of local capabilities is not unique to the local public sector, but also includes the local private sector, since the latter is not adequate in the governorate. The issue of development in the Skikda governorate as it pertains to the housing sector is a national issue. That is, national organizations have been charged with studying and executing projects. Local efforts up to now have been limited to probing the needs of the populace and converting them into projects.

Housing projects under the five-year plan that is currently being implemented suffer from a shortage of means of production. The reason for this is the huge size of the operations planned for the project in comparison with the capabilities of the governorate in the field of construction. In the city of Skikda itself work was begun on about 15 apartments. However, on the implementation side, they are progressing slowly and with difficulty because the project is in the hands of national organizations. The only houses completed quickly in the governorate are those that are part of the rush program of prefabricated houses. It appears that social pressures resulting from the long delays recorded in this sector prompted planning officials in the governorate to list the greatest number of projects possible and ignore the encouragement of the creation of production capabilities. For this reason, these projects have remained suspended either in the study phase or the phase of awarding contracts and beginning work. In some cases, the five-year plan housing projects in this governorate had to wait 4 full years for studies to be completed and contractors to be found.

It is sufficient that we mention that throughout the past 4 years in the governorate's housing sector, not more than 4,000 apartments have been built. In other words, an average 1,000 apartments have been built each year. This is

four times the number completed before 1977. However, it is considered to be a drop in the bucket in comparison with the size of the housing problem in the governorate and the size of the housing sector program scheduled in the five-year plan. This number continues to be just one-fourth the number of houses built in the governorate of Tizi Ouzou, for example. Work will begin this week on 15,000 apartments in five new residential areas. However, the majority of the work will be done by national or regional companies or private contractors from outside the governorate.

The governorate suffers from an extreme concentration of urban housing projects in the governorate's capital, the city of Skikda. Half of all the modern houses to be built in the entire governorate will be built here. The remainder are dispersed among the four other jurisdictions in the governorate.

The construction of modern housing does not affect the municipalities of the Skikda governorate. This may be attributable to the shortage of public utilities necessary for modern housing in these municipalities.

Water networks are not found at all in some municipalities and are delapidated in the other municipalities. There are municipalities whose complete population gets its fresh water from tanks that are pulled in by tractors. The problem is not linked to a shortage of water, but to the control and exploitation of water. The governorate owns one dam that has been partly consumed by sand, and another dam that is in the process of being built. We will return to this subject in a later article. Another factor that limits the spread of modern housing to the municipalities is the absence of roads. There are complete jurisdictions that cannot be reached by large freight trucks because of the narrowness or delapidation of the roads. There are complete municipalities where the only paved roads are in the center of town.

This could be attributable to the fact that most of the municipalities are rural in nature and the housing in these areas is called "rural" housing. But even the spread of this type of housing suffers from material shortage problems. The governorate does not possess the means of producing these materials, with the exception of the Skikda brick factory and the cement gravel factory, both of which are regional and not governorate facilities. Also, the shortage of electricity in the countryside is another problem facing the spread of housing programs.

The difficult nature of the land in the governorate, especially in the city of Skikda, has caused the price of a single apartment to be in excess of 200,000 Algerian dinars. This amount of money would buy two apartments in the governorate of Tizi Ouzou and one and one-half apartments in Blida, apartments of better quality than those in Skikda.

The governorate of Skikda uses one-third the amount of cement used by the governorate of Tizi Ouzou, but it only builds one-fourth the number of houses and is far behind in the area of construction in the countryside.

Nonetheless, the housing sector in the Skikda governorate is at the top of the list of development priorities, but it still suffers from the effect of

differences between projects and capabilities, and between projects planned, projects actually implemented, and the needs of the people. Also, this sector, on its current course, is headed toward the creation of housing complexes which do not truly support economic activities. This could exacerbate the imbalance between the countryside and the city and further complicate the problem of emigration from the countryside. The urgent measures that must be taken include correcting the course of this sector in areas affecting the imbalance between the large urban housing projects and the few rural housing projects. The governorate is primarily a rural governorate that is hidden behind a huge industrial complex. The above measures would provide the conditions for active, practical development in the sector, development that is in harmony with the economic activities of the populace. Since the housing situation in the governorate is unusual for the above-mentioned reasons, it is necessary to take unusual measures to treat the situation, whether in terms of methods, or in terms of means.

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COURSE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' UNION ELECTIONS REPORTED

Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic No 3092, 13 Jan 84 pp 24, 25

[Article by Mamduh Mahran: "Elections at Agricultural Workers' Union Are Professional for Lower Level Positions, Political for Top Level Positions"]

[Text] The Wafd Party enters the first trade union elections campaign to win the position of president of the Agricultural Workers' Union.

Fifteen thousand members of the Agricultural Workers' Union go to the polls to elect their new president.

Where does the National Party stand, and what is the role of the minister of agriculture?

Today, Thursday, 150,000 members of the Agricultural Workers' Union in Egypt will go to the polls to vote for their new president. There are four candidates for that position: one of them is the candidate of the Wafd Party, and another represents the National Party.

Although the Wafd Party has publicly declared its support for its candidate, the National Party has not taken similar action.

According to Sa'd Hajras, the National Party is not becoming involved in this election because the union has existed as a professional union and has been apolitical.

What exactly is happening in the elections of the Agricultural Workers' Union if the campaign for lower level positions is still professional but political for top level positions?

The elections of the Agricultural Workers' Union are underway in 26 governorates. The votes of 150,000 union members are being sought to fill the positions of union president, two union vice presidents, 3 at-large members [for the union's board of directors], 6 members [of the board] for the governorates of Cairo and

al-Jizah and a [board] member for each of 12 regions. Each one of these regions includes two governorates. In addition, vacancies for branch chiefs in the governorates are to be filled as well as half the positions in each branch, and that includes a representative for each administrative district and six members for the capital of the governorate. This means that the elections campaign is being conducted on three levels: the central level, the level of regional representatives in the general union and branch representatives.

Four agricultural workers are competing for the position of president of the union. Two of them did hold that position in the past. The contest between them is more intense this time: one of them is running for that office as the candidate of the Wafd Party, and the other candidate is a member of the National Party.

Three candidates are competing for the position of first vice president of the union, and two candidates are competing for the position of second vice president. There are seven candidates competing for one of the three at-large seats on the general union's [board of directors]. There is one candidate for [each of] the vacancies that are to be filled on the remaining levels; among these vacancies are those for branch chiefs in the governorates.

Agricultural workers are saying that their union elections this time differ from previous elections for more than one reason. The fact that in the past the minister used to nominate the candidate for president of the union made the campaign extensive but rather subdued and cool since the outcome was mostly known in advance. This was equally true for both the poor minister or those members who will be elected in an outpouring of enthusiasm to show support for the minister or for the major public figure in the ministry who had come forward [to run] in the election.

This time Dr Yusuf Wali issued strict instructions to the ministry's agencies or sector chiefs in the governorates not to interfere in the election on behalf of any of the candidates. Furthermore, the minister held an expanded conference that was attended by sector chiefs, by the candidates and by the chairmen of the elections supervisory committees. The minister affirmed that the ministry will observe total neutrality in the elections and will not support any of the candidates in any way. The minister said that any ministry official who will not observe strict neutrality in the election will be rigorously questioned. "Therefore," says Engineer 'Abd-al-Raziq Badawi, chairman of the nationwide Elections Committee, "members of the election committees for the governorates of Cairo and al-Jizah were commissioned from the governorate of al-Fayyum. The members of committees for the remaining governorates came from agricultural sectors that have no candidates." [Engineer 'Abd-al-Raziq Badawi] requested the formation of a seven-member central committee to oversee the elections. He also requested the formation of a committee in each governorate; this committee would be chaired by a union member or a public figure, and it would include three members nominated by the [union's] branch in the governorate. He also asked that the elections be conducted in accordance with the law and the union's bylaws.

Agricultural workers say that although the character of the election campaign appears to be more subdued than that of any other election campaign in the past, the climate for this campaign is different. This is because those who will win in

the election will represent the true wishes of agricultural workers. It is here that the weight each candidate personally carries as well as the possible contributions he could make come into play to show the gains he can achieve for the union. Therefore, although the election campaign has been subdued, it has been a heated campaign as far as the activities of the candidates are concerned. The candidates are touring the governorates and relying on their close connections with the centers of influence. The election campaign is more heated in the governorates of Alexandria, al-Minufiyah, al-Gharbiyah, al-Daqahliyah, Cairo, al-Jizah, al-Minya and Asyut. The election campaign is [somewhat] cool in the governorates of al-Buhayrah and Kafr al-Shaykh.

Those governorates where competition in the elections is heated and active are marked simultaneously by increased activity because among these governorates are those from which some of the candidates seeking the position of union president come. [In one of the governorates], furthermore, the competition is more heated because the director of agriculture there, who is a candidate [for that position], is running against a public figure from the same governorate. Although the effect that person has on those who work under him cannot be ignored, the total neutrality that was demanded by the minister gives agricultural workers the freedom to vote [their wishes] without fearing the possible consequences of their votes and how these votes may affect them, as was the case in the past.

The elections campaign is being conducted in a professional context. No insults are being exchanged, and no candidate is trying to outdo other candidates politically. No candidate is talking about anything outside those special concerns which have to do with the problems and demands of agricultural workers as well as support for their union. However, this did not prevent some parties from becoming involved in this election. These parties found in this election campaign an opportunity to test the power of their supporters in this sector.

The Wafd Party nominated one of its members a candidate for the position of president of the union.

The candidate of the Wafd Party, Engineer Muhammad al-Sayyid Ayyub says, "We had agreed that I would declare myself a candidate [for that position] without publicizing the fact that I was a member of the Wafd Party. This is because when I declared my candidacy, the party had not yet received its legal permit. I went ahead with the campaign by myself, relying on my own personal resources. But after the Wafd Party got its legal permit, the party began campaigning intensely among agricultural workers in all governorates to promote my candidacy on a professional basis and not on a political basis. What is political about my candidacy is the fact that I am a member of the Wafd Party and the Wafd Party supports me. But [the focus of] the publicity for my campaign remains in the context of the gains I can achieve for the union and for my colleagues."

Agricultural workers are saying that since the political game is becoming a factor [in the election], candidates, especially candidates for the position of union president, can be found who will manipulate [voters]. Such candidates would assert their independence and the fact that they do not speak for a particular political movement. They would assert that they rather embrace the issues and troubles of agricultural workers. Despite the roots that [such a candidate] has in the Wafd Party--roots which he does not contravene in an attempt to harp on

that tune--such a candidate has gone beyond that stage to address the new generation, utilizing both tendencies [in doing so].

Candidates use a variety of other campaign techniques. Some of them harp on the theme that the union has two groups [of members]: those who have intermediate degrees and those who are university graduates. Each candidate tries to gather people of his own educational background behind him in an attempt to garner votes, even though agricultural workers affirm that they understand that technique. They affirm that all members of the union are equal and that there is no difference between those who have higher degrees and those who have intermediate degrees. They assert that the basis of the election process rests on those personal relationships that agricultural workers have with each other.

Agricultural workers affirm that although the election for the top position in the union has a political character--there are four candidates for the position of union president, and two of these candidates are Engineer Sa'd Hajras, who is a member of the National Party, and Engineer Muhammad al-Sayyid Ayyub, representing the Wafd Party--the elections on all other levels are purely professional in character.

Engineer Sa'd Hajras did serve previously as president of the Agricultural Workers' Union. He is relying on the fact that he is more widely known among agricultural workers because he is still close to them. He is retired from the position of deputy minister of agriculture, a position he had held for several years. Mr Hajras is in the spotlight in his capacity as a member of the Shura Council. The period of time during which he has been away from his position has not been long enough to undermine the close relationship he has with agricultural workers.

The other two candidates for this position are Engineer Husayn Salamah Faraj and Engineer Salah al-Din Abu al-Nasr. Mr Faraj relies on the fact that he is a veteran of agrarian reform. However, Sa'd Hajras shares that qualification with him. Agricultural workers say that it is not agrarian reform that will carry weight in this election, but that it is the agricultural directorates which are scattered all over the country that will. Engineer Salah Abu al-Nasr, however, relies on his affiliation with one of the directorates, even though most of his period of service has been in the governorate where he served as a director of agriculture.

Therefore, these two candidates are not widely known, even though each one of them is relying on the fact that he is a newcomer to this process and that he is running for the position of union president to achieve more benefits for agricultural workers.

The tranquillity that characterizes the union this time is reflected on the union building whose appearance is quite ordinary. No more than a handful of people go to the union building which bears no sign of the fact that a nationwide election campaign for agricultural workers is underway. The only signs that something is afoot are a few posters posted by some candidates and members of the elections supervisory committee, which is making preparations for the elections process. Some of the candidates get together in the union building every evening in an attempt to find out about trends and news, particularly from people coming from

the various governorates. These people relay news of what is happening in their governorates, and they find out about news that is happening in other governorates.

But in the area in front of the building of the Ministry of Agriculture and in front of the building of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform is virtually teeming with publicity posters for the various candidates who intensified their activities in that area because, on the one hand, there is a large number of agricultural workers there and, [on the other hand], because agricultural workers from all the governorates converge on that area. Otherwise, candidates have been going out to all the governorates, each of them trying to persuade the largest number of agricultural workers to vote first and to vote for him second.

Candidates are intensifying their activities in the governorates because they had a limited amount of time to go campaigning. Some people were inclined to have the elections postponed until after March. However, this was prevented by the fact that the month of January had been specifically designated for the election because it is a slow month for agricultural workers who begin their period of activity in February. This delay was also prevented by the fact that the purpose of postponing the election was to wait until the law for the Agricultural Workers' Union was issued so that the election would be held on the basis of that law. However, the ministry's legal adviser declared that it was his opinion that the election be held on the date that had been set for it. He declared that postponing the election would constitute a clear violation of the law.

The elections of agricultural workers are characterized by the absence of a requirement that a certain number [of voters] vote in an election. Also, a run-off election for the Agricultural Workers' Union is usually not required because the union's bylaws require a candidate who wins an election to get a majority of the votes cast in that election. A candidate does not have to receive over half of the votes to win in an election.

No one in the Agricultural Workers' Union fears intervention in or falsification of [the voting process]. All voters and candidates are confident that no one outside their union will interfere in their affairs. The position of their ministry has been decisively neutral. [Both voters and candidates are confident] that any violations which might occur will not go beyond the failure of a candidate to protect his ballot boxes or [an attempt by] one person to do a personal favor for another. All these are simple matters that can be dealt with as long as the administration does not interfere.

One wonders what Engineer Sa'd Hajras thinks about what is taking place in this campaign?

[Mr Hajras said], "The Wafd Party is bringing everything it has into this campaign. I would not have liked this to be the case in a professional union that is apolitical, a union whose foundation is supposed to be national. This is a union that should devote its attention to the difficulties that people in that profession are having. There are 70,000 [agricultural] engineers working in villages under the harshest of conditions at a rate of 14 engineers in each village.

"We are now on the verge of solving the food problem. The only way we can do this

is to develop agriculture, and our means for doing that are the agricultural workers. Therefore, we must keep their union away from the uncharted field of politics. I think that this turning point is a departure in a national sense [from the usual course] to serve the objectives of Egypt. Although some unions, like the Bar Association and the Press Union, may become involved in politics, our union, like the Teachers' Union, the Engineers' Union and the Physicians' Union, is not to be forced into politics because the nature of its mission is different from that of the Bar Association or the Press Union. Therefore, agricultural workers must keep their union apolitical regardless of their party affiliations as individuals.

"The minister of agriculture has issued a bulletin and even held a meeting asking all people in positions of leadership to remain neutral [in the election] even though he is a minister in the government of the National Party. So far the National Party has not taken any action to support [my candidacy], nor have I felt in any way that such action is being taken."

Engineer Muhammad al-Sayyid Ayyub, the candidate of the Wafd Party spoke with AL-MUSAWWAR.

[Question] It is being said that you are the candidate of the Wafd Party.

[Answer] Yes, I am.

[Question] But why didn't the Wafd Party come out supporting your campaign from the beginning?

[Answer] The plan was for the election campaign to follow a professional course. The party was to stand behind the scenes. If the party were to get its legal permit, the party's position [on my candidacy] would be declared, but if the party were not to get its legal permit, that matter would remain confidential.

[Question] What is the party's position now?

[Answer] There is nothing to keep us from making a public declaration now that a ruling has been issued [in our favor]. I have, therefore, declared myself the candidate of the Wafd Party, and the Wafd Party declared that I came forward from its ranks to declare my candidacy. Party leaders and members [who are also members of] the Agricultural Workers' Union have been mobilized to advocate and support my candidacy with all the resources that are available to the party under present circumstances.

[Question] But are you confident about the outcome of the campaign?

[Answer] I have no doubts about Dr Yusuf Wali. He is a man of integrity, and he can declare his neutrality in the election. I am quite confident in the integrity of the election campaign and the soundness of its outcome. I am convinced that pressures always produce negative results, particularly in elections for professional unions. The last time I was elected president of the union all the agencies were against me, but the agricultural workers were with me, and I was elected president.

We also interviewed Engineer Husayn Faraj Salamah [sic].

[Question] What do you think of the conditions under which the election campaign is being conducted?

[Answer] There are instructions that the election process is not to be interfered with. A bulletin signed by Dr Yusuf Wali, minister of agriculture, has been circulated [throughout the ministry] asking that no official declare support for any candidate. The bulletin requested that everyone be given the freedom to express his opinion freely so as to establish the rules of a sound democracy in the union.

[Question] Will the parties interfere in the elections?

[Answer] The election campaign in its entirety is professional in nature, and it is being conducted to serve farming and agricultural workers. Some candidates, however, have tried to politicize the campaign, but I am confident that agricultural workers are mindful of such attempts.

[Question] What observations did you make in the course of your campaign tours on voters' attitudes toward the campaign?

[Answer] I saw that agricultural workers are determined to participate in the campaign and to vote honestly for those candidates who they think deserve their vote, particularly in this present climate that is prevalent in the union and in the country.

[Question] Has the administration been playing a neutral role?

[Answer] Yes, and every candidate is promoting his own candidacy.

AL-MUSAWWAR [also] interviewed Engineer Salah al-Din Abu al-Nasr who said, "I am a man who advocates production, and I think that producers should stay away from [political] parties. Therefore, I have an election program in which I call upon agricultural workers to rely on themselves and not to ask the government for help. This self-reliance is to be effected through projects that we would set up to finance our union, just as some of the unions that preceded us did. This is particularly [important] since we are responsible for the country's food supply, and we must be aware of the importance of our role. Agricultural workers in their union are professionals and not politicians.

"I was one of the signatories to the minutes of the first meeting that called for the formation of a union for agricultural workers. I stayed away from the union during its early years after it was taken over by the Wafd Party through 'Abd-al-Hamid Siraj al-Din. The Wafd Party had thought it might benefit from its members. I came back to the union in 1971, declaring myself a candidate for the position of vice president."

8592

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FOREIGN POLICY DESIGNS ANALYZED

Paris LIBERATION AFRIQUE in French No 19-20, Dec 83-Mar 84 pp 23-25

[Passages enclosed in slantlines printed in italics]

[Text] Since Colonel al-Qadhdhafi overthrew King Idriss' monarchy in a military coup on 1 September 1969, two political priorities have prevailed in Libya: unity for the Arab world (the heritage of Nasser who died in 1970) and development of relations with the other African countries. Interferences with these priorities shed a strange light on Tripoli's omnipresence in the Chadian affair.

The dizzying growth of oil revenues during the 1960's allowed Libya to become a first-rate financial, military and political power in Africa and to develop its own brand of expansionist strategy on the continent.

As a matter of fact, such a material power is placed at the service of "mass power," as defined in Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's Green Book: This /"third universal theory,"/ which rejects capitalism and communism, advocates /"a true socialism resting on the only democracy ever to be set up in the world since it relies on the control of the people by the people."/ (In "The Solution to the Problem of Democracy: the People's Power." Edition Cujas, Paris 1976.) The defense and propagation of Islam goes hand in hand with the implementation of the Green Book.

Without lingering any longer on the somewhat hazy aspects of the above-mentioned third universal theory, it remains nonetheless that, since Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's advent, Libyan financial capability and remarkable economic and social achievements--which people usually forget to mention--can seduce both the chiefs of state of neighboring countries living in poverty and the supporters of national liberation movements attracted by a socializing language.

Libya, therefore, commands assets enabling it to give free rein to its expansionism which it would be rather simple-minded to pretend to ignore; but wanting to make it into a simple armed extension of the USSR in Africa would stem from a totally simplistic vision, as developed by Reagan and the more conservative African chiefs of state--from Houphouet-Boigny on through Bongo and Eyadéma--a vision often adopted by most of France's Right and part of its more Atlantist and pro-Israeli Left.

Libya's strategy toward Chad is two-pronged: offensive, which is the assertion of its expansionism, and defensive, which is its fear of being surrounded. Let us review this second feature first.

Fear of Being Surrounded

Libya has not always been the USSR's ally it currently appears to be. The fight against communism, carried out on a par with severed relations with the Western world, led Tripoli to support Sadat, the Egyptian president, when he expelled both the pro-Soviet faction of his regime and the Soviet advisers in 1971. That same year, Tripoli supported Nemeiry, the Sudanese president, in order to bring about the failure of the pro-communist coup in Sudan.

However, the first Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement in January 1974 hastened the crisis between Libya and Egypt--a crisis which had been latent since Tripoli had tried coercing Egypt into the two countries forming an union--and encouraged a rapprochement with the USSR. It was the beginning of a collaboration between Moscow and Colonel al-Qadhafi, who was worried to see his powerful neighbor Egypt surrendering to American imperialism

Relations with Sudan underwent the same process when it turned resolutely toward the United States after getting rid of the communist movement and severing relations with Libya. The following years were marked with spectacular breaks and reconciliations. In reality, from 1972 to this day, Egypt and Sudan have anchored themselves more and more securely into the Western camp, tightening their ties to the United States. As for Libya, which had gone from its fight-against-communism phase to the implementation of the /"State of the Masses,"/ it strengthened its alliance with Moscow which became its first supplier of arms, relaying France whose relations with Tripoli were deteriorating because of the Chadian conflict.

The fall of President Gounouki, Tripoli's fickle ally, in June 1982 and Habré's return to power with the support of the USA, Sudan and Egypt added to Libya's concern, already encircled as it was by Egypt and Sudan to the East and, to the North, by the Sixth American Fleet which was patrolling the Mediterranean. It was vital to prevent the opening in Chad of a new front hostile to Libya whose relations with its western neighbor, Tunisia, remained marred by mutual distrust.

Since Reagan's election, the close military collaboration between the USA, Sudan and Egypt (joint maneuvers), the incidents in the Gulf of Sidra (Libyan planes intercepted by the Sixth Fleet) and the American desire to use Habré's Chad as a new relay in its African policy would give credence to the encircling theory, the more so as the OUA Summit's failure to be held in Tripoli had isolated Libya from most countries of the African continent.

The other feature of Libyan strategy, an offensive expansionism, also goes back a long way.

Tripoli's Expansionism

Tripoli took advantage of the armed conflict in Chad to satisfy its territorial appetite. No sooner had al-Qadhafi assumed power that he chose to support the Chadian guerrillas (military training, weapons and daily radio broadcasts) in the

name, it seemed, of Islam's defense: /"Islam and Chad's Moslems are being religiously oppressed... It is clear that Tombalbaye and his clique are practicing racist discrimination against the arabized populations who make up the greater part of the brotherly Chadian people. The general situation in Chad, which depends on Western and Zionist foreign military bases, is a threat to Chad's neighboring African countries."/ (Excerpts from the Libyan Revolutionary Council officially recognizing the FROLINAT (17 September 1971), as quoted by Robert Buijtenhuijs in "The FROLINAT and the People's Revolt in Chad, 1965-1976," Edition Mouton, The Hague.)

In fact, Tripoli's annexationist plan quickly took shape following this analysis. The breakdown of relations between Chad and Israel changed the attitude of Libya which curtailed its support of the FROLINAT in exchange for Tombalbaye's secret recognition of the Mussolini-Laval agreement which included the 114,000 square kilometers of the Auzu strip (at the extreme North of Chad) in the Libyan territory. This region acquired a very strategic importance, for the establishment of a military base in that area permitted Tripoli to gain 600 kilometers further south over its most advanced base, Sebbah.

When Tombalbaye was overthrown in 1975, the new Chadian military regime called for national reconciliation. Turning toward the FROLINAT which it had somewhat neglected materially, and taking advantage of internal conflicts among the Chadian forces, Libya unified the whole armed opposition under its wing and fashioned a /"Libyan-type FROLINAT"/ (see the article on the armed struggle); within the framework of the reconciliation, this would permit, or so it thought, the establishment in N'Djamena of a regime which would be sensitive to its demands and less likely to oppose its expansionist goals.

Yet, its Libya-Chad merger proposal in 1981 was challenged by its own Chadian allies who ordered the withdrawal of the Libyan troops from Chad in November 1981.

As a matter of fact, one constant factor marks Libya's activities in Chad: It never left the least margin of maneuver to the Chadian forces it was supporting, which, in a way, contributed to its failure, for Libyan expansionism has two facets.

One facet is attractive, namely, the acquisitions gained through the "national liberation" which began with the overthrow of the feudal monarchy in September 1969. As mentioned by J. Latrémolière: /"The most skeptical observer cannot fail to be impressed by the vigor and scope of the stimulus given to the Libyan economy by the expansion and improvement of the traditional agricultural areas and the creation of new crops in the heart of the desert; the setting up of petrochemical, iron and cement industries serviced by gas pipelines; the growth of light industries; the introduction of a highway system; and the urban revolution closely intermingling demolition with construction, not forgetting to mention the social change brought to a capital of one million inhabitants, in which commerce could still be found entirely in the hands of foreigners 20 years ago."/ (In MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS of 20 May 1983, p 1243.)

The other facet is offensive, namely, the Libyans' ambition to take over the "Chadian revolution" and give it its direction (that of the Green Book), even if it must resort to political assassination. Several Chadian officials, often

presented as being the most pro-Libyan, have disappeared under suspected circumstances: Baghalani, Brahim Youssouf, Acyl Ahmat, etc. This domineering ambition is imprinted with a certain racism. Tripoli always relied more willingly on the Arab groups of Central Chad (today's CDR [Revolutionary Democratic Council] faction) to achieve its goals: The changes of alliance of Gounouki Oueddei, Toubou of Tibesti, sometimes an ally of Tripoli, sometimes of Paris, reflect this practice of Libya which never considered him an absolutely sure ally. The Libyan army, omnipresent in Chad from December 1980 to November 1981, was perceived by the Chadian population as an occupation army as domineering as a French expeditionary corps.

It is in the light of these two factors, fear of being encircled and assertion of its expansionism, that Libya's action since June 1983 can be analyzed.

Libya in 1983

Following the failure of the OUA Summit in Tripoli, Libya, isolated and fearing to see the confirmation of its encircling theory, chose to rearm the GUNT (Transitional National Union Government) of Gounouki Oueddei, the outcast president who, late in 1982, had resettled in Northern Chad, in Bardai. Libya's goal was to force Habré, the indomitable opponent, to negotiate and to achieve this, its GUNT allies had to recapture the BET [Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti]. As usual, Tripoli had no intention of letting its allies escape its domination and it limited its support to an armament which was insufficient to capture the capital, N'Djamena. The GUNT and its president, Gounouki, in particular, wanted to bring Habré down to his knees (the famous "war of chiefs") and to push the offensive further on. The initial overwhelming thrust of the GUNT troops followed by an immediate retreat were undoubtedly due to these disagreements. The GUNT defeat was catastrophic for Libya, since it wanted to prevent being encircled, and that is when it clearly intervened directly. The recapture of Faya Largeau, the BET's key position, with the aid of the Libyan air force, set in motion the Manta military operation of France whose action in June-July decisively changed the ratio of forces in Habre's favor.

Libya was only trying to prevent the GUNT's destruction, but, aware of the lesser capability of its army, it was not seeking a direct confrontation with the French troops. Besides, the GUNT forces never went down to Sala (400 kilometers south of Faya), even though the town was empty for several days before the arrival of the French paratroopers. Tripoli wanted both to stop Habré and bring the GUNT to heel. Consequently, the CDR troops (the Arab faction), who had not participated in the June-July fight, were sent to the Oum Chalouba front.

This is a far cry from the depiction of the conflict as presented by the media last summer. A skillful campaign of disinformation presented the waves of "Libyan" troops in Chad as a threat to "the free world," for Moscow's support was certainly behind Tripoli.

Poker faced, the United States declared that France was hesitating about intervening militarily in Chad in order not to sacrifice its interests with Libya. Such a distortion of reality leaves one aghast.

To be sure, Libya's economic ties with the Western powers are very close, but Libya depends most on North American technology. The United States are at the forefront when it comes to heavy industry and large-scale industrial projects, not forgetting petroleum. One example will illustrate this double-dealing. Reagan blocked the delivery to Tripoli of the Airbus whose motor is the product of US technology, thus thwarting European interests; meanwhile, Tripoli has just signed a fabulous contract with a South Korean company (in FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC of 24 November 1983, Hong Kong), the Dong Ha Corporation, which will permit to link Libya's Northern and Southeast regions via a type of artificial river allowing large-scale irrigated cultivation projects: 12,000 workers and North American technical assistance will enable the project to be finished in 6 to 7 years, thus completing the first phase of the /"green revolution."/

Yet, we have gotten used, especially since Reagan, to the United States refusing any financial and economic support to those whom it considers /"agents of Moscow"/ (Granada is a recent and dramatic example).

A financial power, Libya is armed first by the USSR although the importance of French assistance with regard to aviation should not be disregarded; but, it is to the Western countries that it must turn to build up, with the help of the petroleum manna, an economy which it would eventually like to see become independent. In the present situation, Libya is vulnerable inasmuch as this conquest of independence is linked to the technological assistance that the Western camp is willing to grant it. It is obvious that Libya's small population and its technological dependency prevent it from becoming an imperialist power. Its inability to give a new impetus to Chad in 1980-1981 is positive proof of that. There is a margin of maneuver in this situation, which makes it possible to think that the Libyan interventions in Chad can be settled other than by military means.

Such a situation makes it possible to wonder the exact position of Libya on the international chessboard and, consequently, on the limitations of its expansionist strategy.

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SOCIALIST DEMOCRATS OUT TO WIN 'CREDIBILITY BATTLE'

Tunis LE TEMPS in French 31 Dec 83 pp 2,3

[Interview with Secretary-General Ahmed Mestiri, leader of the Movement of Socialist Democrats, by Abdellatif Fourati and Mustapha Khammari, translation by M. Lahmar, in Tunis, 31 Dec 83]

[Text] The closing year 1983 will go down as the year in which political pluralism was born in Tunisia. The event will be a landmark in the nation's history, and bears witness to the maturity of the Tunisian people and to the vision of their political leaders.

On this last day of the year, we joined with AL-SABAH in opening the microphone to the leader of one of the recognized movements, one which has just held its first congress. We put our questions to M Ahmed Mestiri, secretary-general of the MDS. Here is the text of our talk with him.

LE TEMPS: No question but that your movement's first congress, in and of itself, is a major event. A number of observers, though, have been struck by the measured and balanced tone of its closing resolution on policy, by the amount of work the congress got through, and by its resolutions and debates. Was this something expressly planned or ordered so as to reassure the government and the other parties?

Ahmed Mestiri: You are right: the tone of the general report I delivered to the congress in the name of the political bureau, like that of the resolutions and speeches, was moderate. However, the basic principles and general positions of the movement at all levels remains unchanged. There was no concession of any kind on those points. I am sure you must have noticed that every word that came out of the congress bore the imprint of sincerity, particularly because all of them had been freely debated there, after having been the subject of earlier discussions. Furthermore, several proposals submitted by the political bureau were either rejected or evoked opposition and even abstention from delegates.

... In the end, not a single resolution was adopted unanimously. This is because we were concerned with winning the credibility wager: with regard to our people, to national and international opinion, to the intellectuals and the cadres. I think you were also able to note that, in our approach to the present state of affairs in Tunisia, we did not confine ourselves to the negative side, but tried to give equal emphasis to the positive. The same may be said of the solutions we proposed, and of what we choose to call the alternative. As an opposition movement, it is quite natural for us to call for a change, which is by no means tantamount to shouting, "Get out so I can get in!" It is a call for change in our political, economic, and social underpinnings, and in our cultural orientation. To sum up, what we mean by alternative is a change in the practice of governance, because, as we see it, the alternative is not merely changing the people [in government], but radical and global change of the whole situation in Tunisia. Since we are still taking our first steps in the practice of pluralist democracy, our goal is to make the individual Tunisian citizen and public opinion as a whole aware that there is a responsible opposition movement that bases its opposition to the present system on a statement of its positive aspects and in considering alternatives once opposition to suggested solutions arises.

LE TEMPS: The political discourse aired at your congress sounds like reconciliation among contradictions. You seem to be trying to reach all areas of Tunisian society, left and right all tossed in together; this was particularly clear in the remarks of delegates close to the Marxist Left, as well as in those of delegates with overt Islamist leanings. Is it feasible, and do you think you are strong enough to bring off a mobilization effort so broad as that?

Ahmed Mestiri: Just so things are clear to everybody. Our goal is not to monopolize the opposition and political action all over the country: in other words, politics. We have said this before, and I repeat it now.

It follows, from this position of principle, that within the framework of our concept of our role in public life, we want to be with those who are inside as well as outside of government, by which I mean with the Destourian Socialist Party and with the other opposition groups. That is our approach for the present and for the future.

All Welcome

Naturally, we have our own approach and a specific field of activity within the framework of collective action, within whose bounds we stake out our position. There are no walls around this field insofar as concerns citizens whose support for our movement we seek in political action and in fair and open competition, with no bars to any category of Tunisian society whatsoever.

There are some, for example, who would be surprised to find themselves included among our concerns -- such as businessmen and farmers, even as we have made it clear on many occasions that there is another category that can be brought into this discourse, one including the working people and all who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow

Our movement looks upon the first-mentioned as people who work and produce and play a part in the economic system that must be rewarded, so long as they respect the law. As for those we refer to as "parasites," they cannot be described as producers in any economic sense. Their "work" consists of sitting behind a desk, telephone to the right and telex to the left, and acting as go-betweens for people who want banking services. They produce nothing, make no contribution to the economy. We might compare them with autumn leaves that fade and fall to earth at the slightest chill wind of crisis or trouble. This class of people is not of interest in our discourse, which is addressed to all genuine producers playing an important and useful part in the economy. This explains the presence of businessmen on our movement's national council. Among our members we count middle-management people active in government and in the liberal professions. Our structures are filled to the brim with workers, to the point where union cadres accounted for more than a third of our candidates at the last elections. In view of these facts, we find no contradictions in addressing our movement's views to more than a few sectors of the Tunisian people.

As to our view of the makeup of the Tunisian society, we find it markedly different from that of other Arab countries, in that the middle class is the predominant class in our society. Hence it is the makeup of our society that dictates the options in our economic program and in our development plan, all of which confers a kind of complementary balance upon our combination of that social structure and our own political options.

In setting about accomplishing this, our policy here is to define the specific domain of each class of society: when it comes to business, we have selected the relationship among the following three categories: the employer, technical cadre, and workers. We assert the need for psychological incentives within the enterprise, where its absence contributes to entrepreneurial imbalance. Incentive is an essential tool which enables any enterprise, public or private, to play its proper economic role. This being the case, it is incumbent upon us to encourage the emergence of such incentive so that the employer can fulfill his duty in a healthy climate and establish relations of mutual confidence with the other cadres. In exchange, the employer must watch his own behavior, and refrain from anything hurtful, thereby setting the example for all who work for him. Viewed from another perspective, technical cadres must be knowledgeable enough to have their voice in technical matters, and thus their share of responsibility. The same must be said of workers.

I should like to point out that there is no slightest contradiction in our political discourse, so long as we say the same thing to the CEO-employer, the technical cadre, and the worker in order to lay down the rules for peaceful coexistence and assemble all the requisite conditions for the economic success of the enterprise.

Points of Convergence

I should also like to state that we do not seek to monopolize the political scene, because I am certain that Tunisia needs, on every step of the way, to mobilize all our dynamic forces and all political factions. We can even find points of convergence with the Socialist Destourian Party (PSD), as well as with the opposition groups when it comes to political, social, and economic orientation, or to protecting the nation's independence, or again to repudiating violence and foreign allegiance. I am not opposed to the concept, but I stand firm against any allegiance which impinges on the independence of the government's decision-making.

LE TEMPS: You have been criticized for urging the opposition to stick together, especially since opponents felt that it was not in your interest to include such an appeal in the movement's first political manifesto. The idea has also surfaced in the remarks of the Tunisian Communist Party (TCP) spokesman. Does this mean that you are in fact out to monopolize Tunisian politics? Especially since the idea has been perceived as a threat of monopolization. What do you think about that? And, in the same order of ideas, what do you think would be the best way to obviate a proliferation of political parties?

Ahmed Mestiri: I don't believe anybody has accused us of hogging the political stage. Particularly since we made such a point of inviting all the opposition groups to our last congress. We are aware of this delicate situation, especially since we are still in the initial phase of political pluralism. Pluralism is not a universal favorite, either inside the government or outside it. I think there are two ways to wound pluralism: the first is banning, in the sense that there are people who do not believe in political activity and who think that societies can be governed only by force, plus whatever apparatus it takes to run the country. Advocates of this approach are to be found in and out of governments everywhere in the world.

The second approach is compounded of Machiavellianism and naïveté: open the gates to whoever knocks, to the point of suggesting the resurrection of 11 parties in Tunisia. This is an attempt to make such a monstrous mockery of the multi-party approach that it will die a-borning. Insofar as we are concerned, we see nobody who can convincingly accuse us of monopolizing politics. For that matter, we invited people with differing priorities and a number of other political parties. If we are talking about ground-rules

for pluralism, here they are:

Reduce violence

Define the authority of the courts

Expose foreign allegiance.

I am not talking about banning ideological allegiance, but about the organic, intimate ties involved in political and material dependency.

Bring In All Concerned Parties

I believe that the definition of the ground-rules for democracy should be written into a law, in the drafting of which all concerned parties must have a voice. By this I mean all the various political parties. I have informed the prime minister and the PSD leadership of our position on this issue. Accordingly, we support the idea of drafting legislation defining the ground-rules of pluralism, provided that everybody has a say in it.

In the advanced countries there are many formulas supporting pluralism, one of them vesting legitimacy in the voters. This is the source for our argument that the state ought to pay certain expenditures by the political parties, insofar as those parties play a significant role in public life. The state could provide partial funding for parties attracting 5 percent of the vote, so as to obviate the need for them to seek funding abroad. It follows from this that funding for political parties is a major issue and one of the key questions that would be settled in the political pluralism legislation.

LE TEMPS: The motions and resolutions adopted [by your party] mention the matter of early free elections (legislative and municipal), but you have not defined the machinery for such elections, particularly the legislative contests, in view of current constitutional law which gives the head of state the right to dissolve Parliament only after a long and complicated process based on a motion of censure or self-dissolution by Parliament. That was the procedure followed 2 years ago, and there is no indication that it will be invoked a second time. How would you go about getting early elections?

Ahmed Mestiri: We did not call for "early elections," but for "elections within the shortest possible time." You must have noticed that we set no specific date for them.

What we have here is a matter of principle. Our view of the opposition's working methods implies their presence within the representative structures as part of the process of improving the political climate in this country.

Furthermore, it is important that the party in power include the head of state, but this need not necessarily signify a monopoly over the machinery of representative government. The political opposition should be embodied in the Chamber of Deputies and in the city councils. However, detailed consideration of ways and means ought to be put off to a later phase.

LE TEMPS: By-elections are slated for the next few months for two or three seats. Will your movement take part in those elections?

Ahmed Mestiri: As a matter of fact, I cannot answer that question. However, we feel that the present Chamber of Deputies was elected under abnormal conditions. So that there may be no chance of interpreting our participation as a ratification of what has occurred there, we are still insisting on our right and we still challenge the legality of the results of the November elections. Should the elections to which you refer be held, we shall formulate our final attitude as to their validity.

LE TEMPS: What is your movement's thinking on possible constitutional amendments?

Ahmed Mestiri: The Constitution we have now was promulgated in 1955. It is a democratic constitution, designed for a pluralist system. We feel that it is, on the whole, an acceptable constitution. Hence there is no need to amend it, except on a few points of detail. We blame the country's political system for failing to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Constitution. We feel that the Constitution requires revision in the light of the requirements of our day and of the circumstances Tunisia is currently undergoing.

It goes without saying that I cannot cite the articles and clauses that need revision by the Chamber of Deputies as representatives of the Tunisian people.

LE TEMPS: The congress wound up in an atmosphere of general good feeling, but there are those who complain that it was not democratic in that it did not allow all delegates to speak their minds freely, particularly in the selection of national council members and in the procedure which was followed.

Ahmed Mestiri: We think that charge is unfounded, because our congress was indeed democratic, witness the fact that not a single resolution was unanimously approved. Opposition to some resolutions was duly recorded in the working commissions and at the plenary session. Furthermore, several essential points were debated at considerable length, such as; for instance, the question of transferring government land to a few foreign privately owned corporations. This point, mentioned in the report of the specialized working commission evoked lively objection and abstentions

within the commission itself. The problem was placed before the full congress. Its rapporteur suggested three solutions:

- strike out the offending paragraph;
 - retain the paragraph after some changes;
 - Replace the paragraph, accompanying it with a condemnation.
- When the debate was over, the congress opted for the third solution.

Among other points which were debated were the women's question and our attitude toward the Palestinian problem. So there is no grounds for blaming us for the democratic procedure that enabled us to determine the congress' orientation and to adopt resolutions. Even so, I do not feel that the fact that some people disapprove of the leadership is either illogical or irrational. We were led to take some measures and work out some solutions insofar as the transitional phase is concerned. They were ratified by the congress. Nevertheless, this does not constitute an exception to specific provisions in our internal rules, because these were interim measures which will remain in effect until the next congress meets in 1985. Up until 19 November, our movement had been under constant pressure on the grounds that it was forbidden to engage in certain activities, and all of this had an impact on our structures. This state of affairs led to our failure to respect the strict letter of the internal regulation, but the issue that raised the most objections was that of adding a number of members (12 in all) to the political bureau at its request.

Since our movement's makeup is not confined to those who hold positions in the regional structures and in the leadership, while a large number of Party members working since 1979 in the press and in higher education have not been able to assume responsibilities at the federation level, we thought it would not be a bad idea to give them a voice in the leadership. Furthermore, we believe that had the national council election been conducted in observance of internal regulations, they could have announced their own candidacies and been elected.

I want to make it quite clear that on three occasions I submitted the proposal for their election to the participants, and I asked them for their approval in principle for the idea first, and then asked them to vote on it. And we certainly allowed all those opposed to express their points of view. Similarly, there are those in the government who dislike the content of the resolutions we adopted. They must not forget that we are an opposition movement, and we have no intention whatever of being a mere facade of opposition. We want our opposition to be real, honest, and serious. This is why you find differences in our analysis of certain situations.

LE TEMPS: Now that your congress is over, you are moving into a transition period during which you plan to proceed with a restructuring of the movement from top to bottom, an effort to be crowned by the gathering of yet another congress. What are the steps by which you plan to bring about this restructuring?

Ahmed Mestiri: The main steps in building the new structure will be adding movement branches in all the regions where we have members and supporters; this will be achieved by adding new members. To do this, we shall proceed to draw up a list of members, because as soon as voter cards were issued, a number of citizens expressed a desire to join our movement. So we are going to define the requirements for membership in conformity with the provisions of our statute: the candidate for membership must be sponsored by two members; he must agree to serve a period of apprenticeship, and a subsequent period doing Party work and proving his commitment before he can take on certain responsibilities. We all know that these rules are called for in the internal regulations of all political parties.

We should note that the establishment of the branches will be followed by elections to the federations.

The National Council will be meeting shortly to sift and weigh the decisions of the congress. That will take place at an extraordinary session called to set up two structures and appoint two auditors, and, lastly, to form several permanent specialized commissions.

LE TEMPS: On the matter of the November elections, you said in your political manifesto that, contrary to report, the vote in favor of the green ballot was not a reaction against the party in power, but a response to a conviction. Does that refer to a practical evaluation of the results of those elections?

Ahmed Mestiri: I have noticed in comments in the national and international press an allegation that the vote for the MDS was tantamount to a reaction against the party in power. That explanation was not logical, because in the districts where the MDS was competing with other opposition movements, we won a majority of the votes. There are a lot of Tunisians who prefer the approach our movement stands for.

As for evaluating the results, we don't have specific data, aside from a few figures given us by the Interior Ministry. This does not prevent our saying that we had a majority, which we announced on the basis of information gathered in certain polling-places. I am certain that our candidates won at least in Jendouba and in Medenine.

LE TEMPS: Recognition of your movement and of pluralism is not an end in itself. How do you see your role in the effort to improve

the political climate in this country, and what will be the practical impact of your ideas?

Ahmed Mestiri: Practically speaking, we hold that we have the right to criticize and judge in all areas relating to the executive power and to government. We have the right to express our viewpoints as best we can. Furthermore, there are a number of essential questions that spill over the area of government and state responsibility, because we believe that anyone who has influence in society has a right to speak out and to propose solutions to the problems of society, such as violence, corruption, and the decadence of social mores.

We believe that the vital issues having to do with Tunisia's future: education, foreign policy, and development, are not the sole province of the government. It is therefore necessary to bring the opposition into dealing with them. This is the proof of the existence of a democratic, pluralist system based on structures which bring together government and opposition. Furthermore, the opposition must be able to sit on any planning commission, once it is formed. Hence it is necessary to bring the opposition into the decision-making process and into the exercise of responsibilities.

In this connection, I should like to state right now, with emphasis, that we are not out to monopolize the opposition. We feel that democratic change is a difficult and delicate matter thrust upon us by the times. It is vital, therefore, that all parties and all factions which support this view, be they in or out of government, mobilize to make certain that this democratic change does indeed come to pass. We feel in large measure responsible for the success of this operation. We know that we are bound to encounter obstacles and hindrances, including a psychological obstacle in the fact that there are some minds in positions of responsibility that have not yet assimilated the notion of pluralism in politics.

LE TEMPS: And beyond our borders?

Ahmed Mestiri: An ambassador asked me that very question, and I gave him a frank answer: I explained that our philosophy does not overreach the boundaries of Tunisia. What we are doing here is peculiar to our country. We cannot imagine imposing this model, designed for our own public life, on Algeria, or on Libya, for example, any more than we can imagine their dictating their views to Tunisia. We do not contemplate imposing our pluralistic system on those countries: we consider it a civilizing asset to the Arab nation in particular, and we are an integral part of that nation. This is true despite the fact that it is impossible to cabin and confine the movements of ideas and ideologies. The success of this experience goes beyond the borders of Tunisia, but we shall take no steps whatsoever to impose it on others.

TIES TO SOVIET UNION SAID TO IMPROVE

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic No 35, 10 Dec 83 p 11

[Article by Diyab Nabhan: "Three Factors Are Behind the Improvement in Iraqi-Soviet Relations"]

[Text] President Saddam Husayn has expressed Iraq's satisfaction at the Soviet Union's resumption of friendly relations with it. He did so in the context of a reply to a question asked by a journalist about the position taken by the great powers on the Iran-Iraq war. Previously, Baghdad had witnessed a string of meetings and encounters by high officials of the Iraqi state and the Soviet delegation, which is led by Ryabov, a member of the central committee of the Soviet Communist Party and chairman of the state commission on foreign economic relations. The aim of these meetings was an exchange of points of view between the two countries. They were also intended to pave the way for talks in Moscow at the start of next year, when the Permanent Joint Committee for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation will convene. Ryabov, who concluded his visit to Baghdad at the end of last November, said that those meetings had achieved positive progress which strengthened and developed the cooperative relations between the two countries.

Moreover, AL-TADAMUN has learned that foreign diplomats in Moscow have confirmed that the visit by Tariq 'Aziz, the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, was intended to improve bilateral relations between the two countries, despite the Soviet Union's neutrality with respect to the Gulf War. In this regard, it has been noted that the TASS news agency quoted Mr Tariq 'Aziz as commenting on his visit to Moscow by saying that it had been "very useful and characterized by a spirit of friendship and deep understanding."

In light of that, one can say that a certain amount of warmth or heat has crept into Soviet-Iraqi relations, after the chill which befell them following the outbreak of the war. This chill was accompanied by apparent Soviet neutrality on the war, which was understood as a cover for a pro-Iranian position because of the following considerations:

1-There is a friendship and cooperation treaty between Iraq and the Soviet Union which was signed in April 1972. On the basis of this treaty, the Soviets are responsible for supporting Iraq if it is exposed to danger or foreign aggression. The declaration of neutrality by the Soviet side was considered a shirking of that responsibility

2-The cessation of arms shipments to the two warring countries deprived only Iraq of arms, since the armaments of the Iranian forces are mostly American or Western, while Iraq's were mostly Soviet. In addition, there were Iraqi contracts for the purchase of Soviet arms and equipment which predated the outbreak of the war. The Soviet Union was supposed to deliver this material on time, but that did not happen in the months following the start of the war in September 1980.

3-The atmosphere which dominated the 26th conference of the Soviet Communist Party, which was held on 20-27 February 1981, favored the Iranian side. That was made clear in the speech given by the secretary of the Iraqi Communist Party at the conference. It openly gave Iraq "the responsibility for causing the situation to explode." It was also clearly stated in the speech given by former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, who announced his country's readiness "to develop good relations with Iran."

Thus, the Soviet Union's neutrality was not equidistant between Iraq and Iran. Rather, it was closer to Iran, especially since the Soviet Union continued to look for the establishment of stronger security, economic and political ties with Tehran. It permitted between 30 and 50 percent of Iran's exports to pass through Soviet territory via the Siberian railway and the Caspian Sea.

Despite the tension which came to characterize Soviet-Iranian relations as a result of the liquidation of Iran's Tudeh Party, which was loyal to Moscow, the arrest of its general secretary, Nur al-Din Kiyanuri, the expulsion of 18 Soviet diplomats from Iran at the start of last May, the clear rapprochement between the United States and Iran, which was supplied with arms by America and its ally Israel, and the wariness which Soviet Leader Yuriy Andropov evinced toward the Iranian regime, the Soviets did not cut back their dealings with Tehran at all. The Soviet Union still honors the agreements concluded between Iran and itself in past years, according to which Iran obtains Soviet military and security-related expertise as well as weapons, through other parties. This matter has been expressed by President Saddam Husayn in his own special language, for which he has become noted. It consists of using words in unusual linguistic contexts to convey a thought or opinion. It was expressed when the president was at an exhibition. He responded to a question from the Cairene newspaper AL-AHRAM by saying: "We can say that the two countries"--he meant the United States and the Soviet Union--"have not ceased wooing the flirtatious girl of the neighborhood...the Iranian regime." He said: "Weapons from these two countries are still going to Iran, one way or another."

The resumption by the Soviet Union of friendly relations with Iraq can be ascribed to the failure of the wager it made on the establishment of developed political ties with Iran, as well as the failure of its attempts to penetrate the structures of the Iranian regime. Moreover, it follows the liquidation of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and the sending of special broadcasts by the Iranian regime to the areas of the Soviet Union bordering on Iran. These broadcasts created a certain amount of discomfort in Soviet circles and contributed to the tense relations between Moscow and Tehran. Moreover, it is clear that the firmness of Iraq's domestic position, the Iraqi army's resistance to Iran's military invasions along Iraq's borders, and the objective attitude taken by

Iraq with regard to the war have also been important factors in the clear improvement which has occurred in Iraqi-Soviet relations.

One question being asked these days remains: Will the meetings and contacts going on between Iraq and the Soviet Union be crowned by a visit by President Saddam Husayn to the Soviet Union next year?

The Kuwaiti news agency has published an item it attributed to American diplomatic sources in the Soviet capital. According to this report, there are some indications that President Saddam Husayn will visit some socialist countries, including the Soviet Union. The agency said that these sources had stated that the American ambassador had learned of this visit during an official ceremony in the Kremlin and while speaking with some Arab diplomats. However, the Soviet and Iraqi sides have made no announcement concerning this visit. Those who know President Saddam Husayn's circumstances and his leadership of the battles with the Iranian side single that out.

12224

CSO: 4404/198

OIL MINISTER SET TO DEMAND HIGHER PRODUCTION QUOTA

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic No 35, 10 Dec 83 p 20

[Article: "The Iraqi Oil Minister to AL-TADAMUN: 'We Will Demand an Increase in Our Production Quota'"]

[Text] In a statement made to the representative of AL-TADAMUN, Iraqi Minister of Petroleum Qasim Ahmad Taqi announced that when the OPEC ministerial conference in London set Iraq's production share at 1.3 million barrels a day, "we realized and believed that this share did not represent our real weight among the member countries in the region, if one takes into consideration the huge, great oil reserves we possess, the level of output which was achieved in the years prior to the war, our current productive capacity, and the need we have for financial resources in the aftermath of the aggression against our territory. These factors, as well as others, determine the size of the shares of all the petroleum-producing countries."

In his statement to the AL-TADAMUN representative, the Iraqi oil minister added that Iraq has never believed that the share it was given was objective. This is recorded in OPEC's minutes. "But we accepted it for a simple reason. At the time, it was impossible for us to produce more than that figure. On the contrary, for a long time, Iraq continued to produce a quantity of oil which was less than its allotted share, with others benefiting from the difference between what we were producing and the share we had been granted. Our assurance that it was impossible to produce that figure has to do with the limited nature of our export facilities. Exporting through the southern ports stopped on the first day of aggression against our country. Exporting through Syria stopped when the regime there closed the pipeline which passes through the territory of that brother country on 10 April 1982. Our productive capacity was limited to what we could consume at home and export through our one remaining gateway: the Iraqi-Turkish border. But now our export capacity across this border has increased. It will go up again this month, reaching 900,000 barrels a day. It will rise once again in April, when it will reach more than one million barrels a day."

12224

CSO: 4404/198

NA'IM HADDAD INTERVIEWED ON PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE WITH EUROPEANS

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic No 313, 21 Nov 83 pp 26-28

[Interview with Na'im Haddad, speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly and member of the Revolutionary Command Council, by 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Qaysi: "The Scope of Our Dialogue With the European Parliamentarians Is Expanding in Favor of the Arabs"; date and place not specified]

[Text] While the parliamentary discussion group of the Arab-European dialogue was meeting in Baghdad and discussing the issues on the agenda, especially the Security Council resolution calling for a halt to the fighting and Iraq's agreement with its clauses, and at the height of the discussions, which centered around the Gulf war, Mr Na'im Haddad shocked those in attendance by saying: "Gentlemen, the Iranians have launched their new attack against the town of Panjwin in northern Iraq, thereby confirming their barbarity, expansionist ambitions, and contempt for international public opinion.

"Permit me to say that Iraq, which is entering the 4th year of a war which was imposed on it, has not merely been defending itself and, by extension, all the Arabs. Rather, it has been defending you yourselves and civilization against the attacks of the new Jenghiz Khan and the modern Hulagu. It has buried these attacks."

AL-DUSTUR met with Mr Na'im Haddad, who is the speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, a member of the Revolutionary Command Council, a member of the pan-Arab leadership, and the secretary general of the Progressive Pan-Arab and National Front, and spoke with him about the most prominent issues which were dealt with by the discussion group and the hot issues of the hour:

[Question] What is the most important result of the Arab-European dialogue?

[Answer] For some time, against a background of critical events in Iraq and the Arab world, the Arab-European parliamentary dialogue, which represents the Arab parliament and the Arab-European Parliamentary League, has been following a serious path based on objectivity and frankness, with the goal of laying the foundation for joint action and cooperation between the Arab and European parliaments. We know, too, that there is an official Arab-European dialogue. The Europeans were trying to limit the dialogue to a group of countries, like the Gulf countries or the Maghreb. They wanted to avoid the region of the

Arab East--the area of conflicts. They were trying to limit the dialogue to economic matters and constantly wanted to avoid discussing political matters. It is well known that America exerts its influence by pressuring the European countries, in order to keep them from venturing into political matters. The same thing is true of the influence of the Zionist lobby within those parliaments. However, one must also consider the development of events, the dangers which threaten Europe as an area of international conflict, and the explosion of events in our Arab region, be it in the Arab East or the Arab Gulf. The Gulf is a strategic, oil-rich region which is of great importance for European interests, especially for the West. Intensified meetings were held by the Arab parliamentarians, with the National Assembly taking on an important share of them. In light of all this, the Europeans began a scientific dialogue, with the goal of linking the discussion on the political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural levels. We affirmed the impossibility of separating the subject of economics from the other subjects. At a time when the Arab region is threatened and is becoming a center of the international struggle, while wars are breaking out in it and the energies of the Arab countries are being exhausted, Europe cannot protect its interests, for the welfare of Europe is tied to our region. After all, we know that 68 percent of Europe's oil imports come from this region. The wheels of European industry are linked to our region. This is especially clear now that the Declaration of Venice has been issued. It was a progressive step away from the earlier European position. We have worked to advance the positions of the European countries concerning the establishment of relations with the PLO and support for the right of the Palestinian Arab people to decide its fate and build its independent state. However, because of pressure from America and the Zionist lobby, as well as the positions of some European governments, the Declaration of Venice was stopped, or rather many European countries retreated from the declaration.

When war broke out in our region and the Iranian aggression against Iraq began, and when Iran later tried to widen the scope of the war, the interests of Europe came to be threatened by this destructive war, because Europe's best international market is this region. Moreover, with regard to oil, Europe began to feel the danger which threatened its interests in the region, especially in the form of Iran's threats to close the Straits of Hormuz, the best waterway for the interests of the European countries, Japan and America. After all, America also imports 35 percent of all Arab oil. Therefore, an expansion of the scope of the war would threaten the interests and the economy of the countries of the Gulf region. Their economy forms a kind of collateral for treating crises in the capitalist economy, not to mention their oil and export activity.

In our dialogue, we also identify all the problems which Europe suffers from as an area of international competition and conflict, especially the continuing attempts by the two great powers to deploy more missiles. Then there is the continuation of Zionist aggression, which took the form of the invasion of Lebanon. We also discussed the expansion of the scope of the Iran-Iraq war, which has been going on for more than 3 years. All this has caused the countries of Europe to sense how the tense situation in our region is reflected in the European situation. Europe has begun to take greater interest in our region in order to find a solution to the problem of the Arab-Zionist conflict and in order to solve the conflict between Iraq and Iran. It wants to arrive

at a peaceful solution. This process has been helped along by the continuation of Zionist aggression, which has used the ugliest fascist, terrorist, aggressive, expansionist means against the Palestinian people inside the occupied territories. It has built settlements and expelled the Arab inhabitants. The demographic character of this area has changed. Thus, Zionism has been working to annex the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Israel, not to mention the annexation and absorption of Lebanon and the comprehensive invasion of Lebanon. This state of affairs has caused Europe to exert rapid efforts in order to find a solution to the problem of the conflict via an evacuation of the Zionist forces from Lebanese territory, to be followed by a solution to the problem of the Middle East.

In the Iran-Iraqi war, Iraq's position has been firm. Iran has rejected all peace efforts and mediation attempts, as well as the resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council. All this has helped Europe--and especially the noble members of parliament--to realize truly that Iraq is a peaceful country interested in security and stability for the region. It has made them see that Iraq, which is following a peaceful path, wants building and development. Of course, Europe would get the lion's share of such development in Iraq. Therefore, the European countries, especially in parliamentary circles, have begun to understand Iraq's positions and to detest the positions of the fascist Iranian regime, especially since Europe had a similar experience with Hitler's fascist regime, which brought disaster to Europe. It has begun to realize that human rights have no value in Iran, and that acts of violence and physical liquidations are being carried out there without rest. Thus, Europe has begun to be seriously concerned with the problems of the Arab nation, in contrast to the past. Europe used to imagine that the region was nothing but oil and a market for its products. But now the citizens of Europe have come to feel the real danger posed by the continuation of the Arab-Zionist conflict, on the one hand, and the Iran-Iraq war, which is just a continuation of Iran's aggression, on the other. Therefore, I believe that Europe will take a stern position if the Iranian regime insists on rejecting the peace efforts. This is especially true in the aftermath of the Seoul conference, which made clear Iraq's peaceful positions and its commitment to peace and stability in the region.

I believe that Europe will take a clearer position on the conflict. Despite the fact that Europe announces its neutrality, some European countries are cooperating politically and economically with the Iranian regime. They must at last comprehend that ending the conflict is in their interest.

[Question] How do you view the Arab-European parliamentary dialogue? Can the participants in the dialogue exert a positive influence on their governments with regard to current issues?

[Answer] In truth, the Arab parliamentarians, and those in Iraq in particular, are proposing that Europe put an end to its indifference and try to find a solution to the problems of the Arab nation. If it does not do this, then the Arabs' relations with Europe will weaken. However, a current, positive development is that the scope of the dialogue is expanding to include other European countries. This causes us to be optimistic about the possibility of causing Europe and the European peoples to understand the real nature of the problems

from which the Arab nation is suffering. For example, the number of European parliamentarians who believe in the European-Arab dialogue is now 650. They are noteworthy, well known people in Europe. I believe that their number will rise and that they will become more influential. The extent of the influence possessed by European parliamentarians on their societies and the political stance taken by the governments of Europe are well known. We have asked our parliamentary brothers in Europe to pressure their governments if Iran rejects the resolutions of the Security Council. Will these governments continue to be silent in the face of the practices of the Iranian regime, the challenge it poses to international society, and the way it threatens peace in this region, which represents the vital artery of the world? The European parliamentarians were completely convinced that it was necessary for them to work with their governments so that the latter would apply political pressure and threaten to cut off diplomatic relations and impose an economic boycott. However, they waited for Iran to announce its position. But Iran did more than that. It did not merely announce its rejectionist position. Rather, it announced an attack on Iraq's northern borders. While they were talking in Baghdad (the Iranian aggression occurred during the dialogue), it became clear to them that Iran was an aggressive, backward, fascist country which threatened the interests of all the peoples of the world. At the ministerial meeting which will be held in Europe a few months from now on the level of ministry heads, these parliamentarians will apply pressure to the European governments in order to make them see the necessity of taking a position and the need for Europe to work to find a solution to the problem of the Iran-Iraq conflict.

[Question] What serious result has the dialogue produced? Did it quickly produce something concrete with regard to the issues in question?

[Answer] Their conviction will definitely be transferred to other parliamentary circles and spread to other parliament members. Their neutrality will cease, since the danger threatens them. First of all, they have become convinced of Iraq's peaceful positions. Secondly, they have seen that Iran's position is aggressive and that the Iranian regime is hinting it will threaten their interests by closing the Straits of Hormuz.

Many of them expressed their opinions of the Iranian regime. Most described it as being inconsistent with the spirit of the age and civilization. They saw it as a reactionary regime whose continuation had no real basis of support. It was decided to use new methods to make the Iranian regime feel its international isolation among all the countries of the world.

[Question] The Western press has repeatedly reported that France is going to apply pressure to the countries of the European Common Market, so that they will pressure Iran economically in the direction of accepting peace. How much truth is in that?

[Answer] We highly praise and esteem France's position. From the administration of its late President Pompidou to President Mitterand, France has shown that it really desires friendship with the Arabs and is really seeking to find a solution for international and regional problems. France's position is completely clear. It does not submit to Iranian robbery and threats. France

has been faithful to its international commitments, especially those to Iraq. Thus, it is not strange for France--the home of the great French revolution and of freedom--to do something to pressure this uncivilized regime which is at odds with the age and can do nothing but issue impudent threats. How great is the number of these threats, which resemble a tempest in a tea cup!

[Question] In the last of its citadels, the Palestinian revolution is facing the aggression of the Libyan and Syrian regimes, which complements Israel's aggression. Although Iraq is busy with the war, what is its position on this aggression? Of course, this aggression forms a dangerous precedent in Arab relations.

[Answer] The attack by the notorious Syrian and Libyan regimes is nothing new. Both of these regimes have cooperated openly with the aggressive, notorious Iranian regime in the attack against Iraq. They provided Iran with all they could, so that it could kill the struggling, Arab people of Iraq. Moreover, these two regimes are masters at holding political auctions and issuing claims. However, in the last analysis they are notorious, fading regimes which are now being used as a tool of the Zionist plan to wipe out the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The position taken by the Syrian regime has been assigned to it by the Zionists and imperialists in the region. This is something even children have come to know. Moreover, Iran has the same role in the Khomeyni era that it had in the era of the Shah. It is supposed to keep Iraq busy, in preparation for the settling of the Palestinian issue, which is the cause of the Palestinian Arab people. All of us remember the Zionist attack on southern Lebanon and the attack on East Basrah in southern Iraq which was timed in accordance with the plan. Now the Tripoli area in north Lebanon is under attack, as is the Panjwin area in north Iraq.

The Syrian and Libyan regimes are well known. They scream morning and evening about opposing imperialism, while their bridges with American imperialism are firm and strong. The task assigned to them is to liquidate the Palestinian revolution as represented by the PLO. Just as the head of the organization is a Zionist--American target, he is also a Syrian--Libyan target. What Israel could not do when it was besieging Beirut--the elimination of the PLO--is being accomplished now by Hafiz al-Asad and Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi before the eyes of the Arabs and the world.

The Palestinian revolution is surrounded now in Tripoli. The Zionist enemy is practicing piracy on the sea, while the Libyan and Syrian regimes are besieging it on the ground. These regimes are pouring lava on the children, old men and women of our Palestinian people in the camps of al-Badawi and Nahr al-Barid.

The target of these regimes--as I mentioned--is the head of the Palestinian revolution. By terminating the revolution, Hafiz al-Asad will seize the Palestinian card. He will be able to bargain with it in the international slave market and completely appropriate the Palestinians' decision-making power.

Therefore, I call on all honorable Arabs to support the unity of the Palestinian revolution, as represented by the PLO, to support the strengthening of this unity, and to resist these two agent-regimes, which have done the Arab nation

great harm. Moreover, we believe that if the PLO is liquidated, the curtain will come down on the cause of the Palestinian people. Their decision-making will be in the hands of Hafiz al-Asad. He will then carry out the plan as it has been laid down for him. He has agreed to carry out the plan for a "price".

[Question] How does Iraq view the suspension of the Fez summit's resolutions on the application of the Arab Mutual Defense Pact? These resolutions were adopted when Iran began its aggression against Iraq.

[Answer] The position taken by the Libyan and Syrian regimes supports the destruction of the Arab League's resolutions. The land of the Arabs is one, from the Gulf to the ocean. It does not matter if it is the land of Iraq, Syria, Libya, Algeria, or other countries. When a foreign regime attacks, the Arabs are supposed to support each other. This idea is found in both the Arab Mutual Defense Pact and the pan-Arab declaration issued by President Saddam Husayn. But the position of the Syrian and Libyan regimes is clearly a traitorous one. It is fundamentally opposed to the existence of the nation, since they have supported a regime which has historically been known for its aggressiveness and the clear enmity it feels for the Arab nation. Some Arab states have adopted hesitant, wavering positions. These countries want to protect their regimes. Others have clearly supported Iraq, but they have not had the strength and capabilities needed to support Iraq militarily.

Others have given Iraq financial support. Iraq respects this support. It is the least which brotherhood and Arabism dictate one should do for a brother facing aggression. Iraq is shedding the blood of its sons in order to oppose the yellow wind and protect the Arabs in all their countries. But let me point out to my Arab brothers that the danger of Iranian aggression is not directed at Iraq. If this aggression succeeds against Iraq, it will not stop there. It is completely similar to the Zionist danger. Therefore, we ask the Arab countries to bear all their historic and pan-Arab responsibilities, because the danger threatens them directly. Some have begun to feel this way, especially after the Iranian threat to close the Straits of Hormuz and the Iranian regime's rejection of all international initiatives. I believe that the Arab position will improve, since all have begun to sense the danger. The Gulf summit lies ahead of us.

[Question] In light of Iran's hint that it will close the Straits of Hormuz, do you believe that it can do so? Or is the threat for internal consumption?

[Answer] Iran is known for its demagogic, larcenous policy. It is trying to threaten to destroy the interests of various countries. The Iranian regime is ruled by politicians wearing turbans, not by men of religion. They use the turban merely to cover up their political modes of behavior and goals. They use Islam as a cover. However, this barbaric regime is fundamentally a deviant case in the international situation. It can commit any crime. However, the countries and peoples of the region are definitely capable of defending their interests. If Iran turns to closing the Straits, that will be the start of its own suicide!

It may first undertake some activity in the south which will have an explosive effect on the conflict. It may permit imperialism to interfere in the affairs of this strategic region of the world, but we in Iraq will confront the Iranian regime in a serious manner and use all our abilities in order to assure freedom of navigation in the Straits of Hormuz and the Shatt al-'Arab. We are now not making use of our legal right to engage in shipping in the Gulf.

[Question] Will Iraq use other strategic means in this region in order to stop Iran's aggression?

[Answer] We will use everything unless they agree to peace. We will destroy the Iranian economy, which is feeding the war. Iraq is determined and serious.

[Question] Some say Iraq has other cards which could be used but have not been played yet. Some say it has other weapons which could decide the war.

[Answer] Our current strategy is not merely defensive. Rather, it is defensive and aggressive at the same time. We are now striking and we will continue to strike powerful blows at the Iranian regime from inside Iran. Our strategy now is to destroy the divisions of the Iranian regime, its equipment, and its military and war machine. If Iran were a state which respected itself, it would sit down at the negotiating table. The thousands who have been killed on Iraq's borders without achieving a thing will give notice that the Iranian regime is completely incapable of breaking through Iraq's impervious borders, which are fortified by the chests of the guards of the eastern gates of the Arab nation. I refer to Iraq's heroic soldiers, led by the victorious President Saddam Husayn.

In their attack on East Basrah, they lost tens of thousands, so that not one small village in Iran was without a funeral. And what about the big cities?

[Question] A great uproar attended the arrival of the Super Etendard aircraft. However, their arrival was not worth the fuss. How do you comment on that?

[Answer] It is our right to use any weapon at all, just as it is our right to buy any weapon in order to maintain our independence and sovereignty against the Iranian aggressors and their barbarity and backwardness. Iran is armed by Israel and America, though it claims to be against them. Yesterday, al-Khomeyni was flirting with Israel concerning the explosion at Tyre. This flirtation shows the real nature of his ties to Israel and America. At the same time, he shouts morning and evening about hostility toward them. I say that if Iran's aggressive waves of backwardness manage to penetrate Iraq's borders, all human civilization will be demolished. These waves are like the attacks of the Mongols and the barbarians. The world should reward Iraq, because it has been able to save the world from the "human viruses" which have come to assault civilization. However, these viruses have been torn apart at Iraq's borders. If it were not for Iraq, the backward Iranians would have brought down world civilization. Al-Khomeyni's regime is oppressive and reactionary. Civilization is at odds with its reactionary, aggressive program. It is very much like the regime of Jenghiz Khan. It is a barbaric wave in the age of civilization.

MEA, TMA MAY FORM HOLDING COMPANY

Beirut AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT & MEMO in English No 2, 9 Jan 84 p 23

[Text]

Middle East Airlines and Trans-Mediterranean Airways, Lebanon's two financially troubled airlines, are expected to set up a joint holding company in order to cut costs, according to reports in the Lebanese press last week. But neither company is seeking to merge completely with the other.

According to the Beirut daily *L'Orient-Le Jour* both MEA and TMA, an all-freight airline, wish to maintain a degree of autonomy insofar as the routes they fly. This remains the main stumbling block in the way of a merger, the newspaper noted.

The reports said Intra Investment Company Chairman Roger Tamraz is studying whether the establishment of a joint holding company for the two airlines is feasible. Intra holds 62 per cent of the shares of MEA and Mr Tamraz is expected to become Chairman of the holding company if one is established.

Closure of Beirut International Airport during periods of fighting and damage during the Israeli siege of Beirut has meant that both airlines have sustained heavy losses during recent years. MEA alone lost LL 300 million (\$55.5 million) in 1983 and TMA is at present operating out of Sharjah in the UAE rather than risk further losses by returning to Beirut.

In a related development, MEA last week obtained insurance cover for its Boeing 747 jumbo jets which will permit them to land at Beirut. Lebanon's National Council for Investment Guarantees (NCIG) is providing cover of up to \$25 million for each of MEA's three jumbos at a premium cost of 1 per cent every three months, according to MEA's Chairman Salim Salam.

The insurance cover means that one of the jumbo jets will be allowed to remain overnight at Beirut airport for maintenance work and that the other two will be allowed to spend up to four hours on the ground at Beirut during the day.

Commenting on the idea of a holding company, Mr Salam said MEA's Board of Directors is to discuss the question on January 17. He said he did not favour a merger because it would mean the airline would lose some of its landing rights and MEA would also have to fire some of its staff.

Meanwhile, MEA has embarked on a swingeing programme of cost-cutting that airline executives say will include shrinking the number of flights by 13 per cent and abandoning some loss-making routes. All expenses will be pared as long as they do not jeopardise the safety of flights or the quality of service. MEA is also seeking voluntary pay cuts by members of its staff.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET UNION SEEN AS UNSURE

London AL-DUSTUR in Arabic No 313, 21 Nov 83 pp 19-21

[Article by al-Salami al-Husni: "Is the Marriage of 'Deception' Between Moscow and Syria Ending?"]

[Text] For the first time in their international relations, the Soviet leaders and the Soviet media neglected to mention the treaty of friendship and mutual defense which links Moscow and Damascus during the visit of 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Syria's foreign minister. At the same time, at the luncheon banquet held during his visit, "'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam devoted the major portion of his speech to praising and lauding the military assistance given by the Soviets to Syria in accordance with the friendship and mutual defense treaty. Two days before the Syrian delegation arrived in Moscow, Boris Ponomarev, the official in charge of foreign relations in the Soviet Communist Party, stated that it was necessary to maintain Palestinian unity. At the same time, the official news agency TASS made mention for the first time of the events in North Lebanon. It focused on the fact that Yasir 'Arafat is the legitimate leader of the PLO. At the same time, several of the world's Communist parties, especially the French Communist Party, which is known for its strong ties to the Kremlin, criticized the massacres which "Syria is encouraging, taking as its target the unity and independence of the PLO and its leadership." Moreover, the joint statement issued at the end of 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam's visit to Moscow made no mention of the Syrian--Soviet treaty. However, it emphasized in a surprising way the Soviet position on the necessity of Arab unity and the need to preserve the leadership and unity of the PLO.

All these indications were enough to stimulate observers, especially in Western capitals, to raise a group of questions concerning Soviet--Syrian relations. Some of them went so far as to say that the Soviets, through Andrei Gromyko, had threatened during the talks with the Syrian delegation that all the Soviet experts would be withdrawn from Syria if the attacks against the PLO continued and the Syrian government continued to pursue its policy of replacing 'Arafat's leadership. These observers see the beginning of this tendency among the leaders in the Kremlin in the new position the Soviet Union announced on the Iran-Iraq war--which came as no surprise--one day after Khaddam's visit to Moscow ended. For the first time since the Iran-Iraq war broke out on 4 September 1980, the newspaper PRAVDA published a commentary containing a frank and clear affirmation of the Iraqi position and a condemnation of "the chauvinism which rules in

Tehran" and of the Iranian regime's insistence on "rejecting Iraq's peace initiatives." This new Soviet position on the war in the Arabian Gulf cannot be explained merely by the deterioration in Soviet-Iranian relations. Rather, part of the answer lies in the dispute which has begun to escalate between Moscow and Damascus. At any rate, an analysis of the statements and the joint communique issued at the end of Khaddam's visit to Moscow can produce only one result: Syrian-Soviet relations have entered the count-down stage. The points of disagreement have become so numerous that it is no longer possible for Moscow to ignore or disregard them. Nevertheless, another important matter is raised by the start of this dispute. It consists of the causes, limits and results of the dispute, which Israel is now trying to exploit for its own benefit, according to statements by David Levi, the Israeli deputy prime minister.

Observers are in unanimous agreement with respect to the real causes of the dispute. They say that the presence of Yasir 'Arafat in Tripoli forced the Soviets to take a position which must have been hard for them to adopt, in view of the wager they have made on Syria, their only 'ally' in the Middle East. The clear determination of the Syrian government to liquidate 'Arafat was understood in Moscow as being a transgression on Syria's part against the red line, since such a move would necessarily lead to a Syrian-American accord on the practical level, with the Syrian-American meetings having been merely an effort to coordinate their positions. It would also lead to the implementation of a plan to divide Lebanon between Syria and Israel. That is, the Soviet Union would be removed once and for all from the Middle East, and a hot front might be opened against it on its borders with Iran. Moreover, if the leadership of the PLO were to liquidated while Moscow kept silent, the reputation of the Soviet Union would be threatened internationally for Soviet arms sent to liberation fronts would have begun the liquidation of the most important liberation front--the Palestinian revolution. Western correspondents in the Soviet capital note that Andrey Gromyko asked Khaddam during the official talks: "What is your real position vis-a-vis the United States and Israel?" The Soviet foreign minister definitely did not mean Syria's announced position. In fact, the Syrian response came in the fashion of the Syrian government itself. The Syrian forces tried to shoot down American aircraft and Damascus issued a warning to the United States of America which was understood in Washington as an attempt to exonerate Syria in the eyes of the Soviet Union. But the Kremlin, according to the new indications, is no longer satisfied with these "Syrian compensations," which really have nothing to do with the essence of what Washington and Damascus have agreed on.

In reality, Syrian-Soviet relations have been like a marriage of "deception" between two parties for several years now, especially since the treaty of friendship and mutual defense was signed. The Syrian government has been maintaining contact with Washington in an effort to affirm that it is actually the party to the Middle East conflict with whom negotiations must be conducted and who can solve or overcome all the obstacles and difficulties blocking any solution Washington might envision to the Palestinian problem. At the same time, it was offering "favors" to the Soviet Union in order to prove itself an "intimate friend" who was essential to the Soviet presence in the Middle East. Within this equation, especially since intervening in Lebanon in 1976, the Syrian government has been able to wager on maintaining this kind of balance

between Washington and Moscow. It has been following a policy which has become well known in other countries. This policy amounts to securing American strategic interests set down by Washington with Soviet cover and arms. As for the Soviet Union, for its part, it was playing the "deception" game with Damascus. The proof is that its military aid continued to be based on actual participation by Soviet experts in running and directly supervising the use of the equipment. This means that Moscow does not trust the Syrian government very much. In the beginning, this subject elicited no irritation on the Syrian side, for Damascus found in it an additional benefit, since it assures Syria genuine cover. As for now, things have reached the point of actual implementation and the fundamental stage in the execution of the American strategy. Therefore, Damascus demanded two things through 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam during his recent visit. The first was an increase in Soviet military assistance in general and the stationing of SS 21 missiles in opposition to the American fleet in Lebanon's coastal waters in particular. The second was support for a decision by the Syrian leadership to use them. This redoubled the Soviets' doubts concerning the Syrian government's real intentions, especially since Moscow is sure that Hafiz al-Asad will not decide to declare war against Israel or the United States of America.

It seems that the marriage of deception has now reached an impasse as a result of the incompatibility of the policies of Moscow and Damascus from the beginning. For this reason, Moscow chose the right time before and after Khaddam's visit to announce its frank opposition to any attempt to liquidate the legitimate leadership of Yasir 'Arafat. It inspired East Germany with the idea of sending someone to tell Faruq Qaddumi that "the Socialist bloc will not desert the PLO, which is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The Soviet media published the telegrams exchanged by Yasir 'Arafat and Andropov. Moreover, PRAVDA, the principal newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party, picked this time in particular to announce Moscow's support for "Iraqi peace initiatives" and to criticize the "chauvinist group ruling in Tehran." In reality, all of these Soviet positions are simply a kind of warning to the Syrian government to the effect that Moscow will not permit others to deceive it. As for Syria, it has sharpened the tone it takes in addressing the United States of America, in order to show Moscow its good intentions. It has given many journalists the idea that the outbreak of a comprehensive Syrian-Israeli war is not unlikely at the present time. It has done so in an attempt to make Moscow see that Syria is still threatened by foreign aggression.

It seems that Washington and Israel have understood Syria's difficult position completely. David Levi, the deputy prime minister of Israel, told the newspaper MA'ARIV that Israel had precise information according to which Moscow was intending to withdraw its experts, as it had done in 1973 before the October War. This would mean that Syria was preparing for a comprehensive war against Israel with Moscow's acquiescence. As for the Pentagon in Washington, it leaked to the press the story that President Reagan would order the Marines and the Sixth Fleet to take revenge for those who were killed in the Beirut bombings. It said he would do so immediately after returning from Korea. The vengeance was to be directed specifically against Syria. It seems as well that the primary goal of this escalation of the situation, which is being achieved via statements, is to save the "marriage of deception" between Syria and the Soviet Union and allow Moscow to continue to be deceived with regard to Damascus's

true orientation until the final arrangements needed to carry out the difficult phase of the strategy and of America's solution to the Palestinian problem are complete. At that point, Moscow will be forced to recognize the fait accompli.

Therefore, the results of the indications of a dispute between the Syrian government and the Soviet Union could not be clearer right now, for both parties are trying to extend the deception. The Soviets make do with warnings, while the Syrians rely on favors. Therefore, as long as Yasir 'Arafat is surrounded in the suburbs of Tripoli, Syrian-Soviet relations cannot go on as they have been. Both Moscow and Damascus now stand before the crossroads which the situation in the Middle East has reached. The two parties might try to look for a longer respite, so as to avoid this choice, but the artillery of the Syrian, Libyan and Iranian forces which have surrounded Yasir 'Arafat will not leave any room for that. Moreover, Washington is now interested in quickly overcoming the difficult obstacle facing the American-Israeli solution to the Palestinian problem by ending the legitimate leadership of the PLO, scattering the Palestinians throughout the Middle East- and negotiating directly with Syria, without the Soviet Union. It seems that the declaration of the Turkish republic on Cyprus is a plain indication of Washington's desire to go into the American presidential elections with Reagan grasping the card of the final solution to the Palestinian problem.

As for the other side of the results of this dispute, it has to do with the possibility of the Soviet Union deciding to withdraw its experts from Syria and to freeze its friendship treaty with that country before the situation deteriorates, if the Syrian government refuses to abandon its plan to liquidate the PLO. In that case, Moscow will build new alliances in the region. This will not only make it likely that the covers which hide America's relations with Syria and Iran will be raised. It will also make it more likely that the strategy of the American-Israeli solution to the Palestinian problem and the Balkanization of the region into small, sectarian statelets will fail. This will also mean the beginning of the countdown for the Iran-Iraqi war, for in practical and logical terms, Iran cannot continue along its current path. When Syria's support collapses, Iran will be threatened by a front along its borders with the Soviet Union.

At any rate, as long as the Soviet Union does not think it is necessary to abandon its Syrian deception, and as long as the Syrian government is eager to continue this trickery, both parties will try to avoid divorce. However, the situation is not developing in the way Moscow and Damascus want. Their divorce will mean that more than one wager in the Middle East will turn out badly, while the cards will be returned for a new dish whose preparation might last a few more years. It will also mean that the region will enter a new stage which definitely will not be determined by the Iraq-Iran war and the continuation of the civil war in Lebanon, but rather by new developments, the key to which can currently be found only in the encircled al-Badawi camp with Yasir 'Arafat.

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GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH ELECTRICITY PROBLEMS

New Power Lines Opened

Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 29 Nov 83 p 5

[Text] The 400-kilovolt project, one of the biggest and most important projects carried out by the General Company for Electric Works and Communications, has been completed for the Ministry of Electricity. Perhaps the most important direct consequence of this huge project is that it is a practical translation of the Ba'th Party guidelines and decisions that underscore the necessity to speed up development, increase electric power consumption and cover the country with electric networks of all kinds. But the most important consequence of the 400-kilovolt project is bringing out one of the party's most outstanding national slogans to the realm of reality and application by working to achieve economic benefits towards reducing power plant reserve and necessary investments on the other hand. This is what the 5-year plan emphasized.

During the inauguration ceremony for the completion of the 400-kilovolt line, 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, announced that the work of the Syrian Networks employees is a national feat because it is an active contribution to the building of modern Syria under the leadership of comrade Hafiz al-Asad and adds a new brick on the road to progress and socialism.

Dr Ahmad 'Umar Yusuf, minister of electricity, likewise reaffirmed the importance of putting a high voltage (400 kv) line into actual service, which contributes to the improvement of the power transmission network and the feeding of the southern area which includes the Provinces of Dar'a, al-Suwayda and al-Qunaytirah. It also reduces power loss and waste and links the electric current to neighboring Arab countries. He mentioned that the second phase of this important accomplishment is underway to link the Rayruzah plant in Hims to the Hamah plant. The two cities of Hamah and Aleppo will also be linked with a high-voltage (400 kv) line in implementation of the Ministry of Electricity plan to bolster the country's power plants and keep up with increasing demands for electric power. Dr 'Abd-al-Muhain Zayn-al-Din, director general of the State Electricity and Communications Company, underscored the importance of fruitful cooperation between the company and the Ministry of Electricity which culminated in the completion of the 400-kilovolt line. He added that the company now has enough expertise to carry out all electric works in all the various fields.

Project Meets Development Needs

This important project comes at a stage when the country is witnessing considerable progress on the social and economic levels with all the increased demands for power that it entails. There is no doubt that this project will open new horizons for increasing electric power at the various levels and will particularly meet the urgent needs of the urban and rural construction boom.

The Syrian Networks [Company] has been able, within its modest capabilities, to complete several electric projects in a very short time since its creation, thus enabling the Ministry of Electricity to go beyond its slogan of lighting one village a day to lighting 3.7 villages a day, according to an announcement made by Minister of Electricity Mr Ahmad 'Umar Yusuf during the 400-kilovolt line inauguration ceremony on 15 November. The Syrian Networks [Company] is executing Ministry of Electricity plans on schedule. These plans center around providing electric power for all new projects; linking all provincial subdivisions to the general network for electric transmission with a tension of 220 kilovolts and 66 kilovolts; providing electric power with better terms to various sectors for lighting and motor power; linking all (lighted) cities and villages to the medium voltage network; developing and renewing urban distribution networks to match increasing electric works, regular voltage specifications, building expansion and lighting the Syrian countryside as part of an intensive program. Through this general program inspired by party resolutions, the company was able in the last 2 years to work within available data to improve electric service in urban and rural areas and to provide electric power at suitable times at the lowest possible cost. The company topped its work with the 400-kilovolt project which it carried out in a way contrary to foreign expert studies and conceptions.

Project Implemented With Local Money and Expertise

When the Ministry of Electricity invited bids for the 400-kilovolt project in order to pick the best offer, no one imagined that a new company like the Syrian Networks Company would come forward to carry this huge project into effect. Not only did the company submit a special proposal to all bidders, but its proposal included some features not available in other bids. Bidders included private contractors and local building contractors, in addition to the Czech company, ("Sturgi Elexport,") which submitted a proposal for 66 million Syrian pounds in hard currency. Here is where the Syrian Networks Company's proposal stood out because it took upon itself to complete the project for 44 million Syrian pounds in local currency. "It was natural, therefore, that the company be granted the contract and given priority by the Ministry of Electricity," said company's director general Dr 'Abd-al-Muhsin Zayn-al-Din, "Particularly as the Czech company was going to burden the project with additional costs since it planned to bring in machinery at the general establishment's expense to run the project and then sell it to the establishment. This is over and above the 66 million pounds which means that the Czech company planned to carry out the project at a much higher cost than we proposed." Thus, the Syrian Networks Company saved hard currency and prepared local cadres for technical expertise, an important characteristic of this first huge project to be carried out in Syria and neighboring states with great economic benefits matching its size.

Project's Economic Advantage

About the economic advantage of a 400-kilovolt electric project and the benefits the country will derive from it, Dr Zayn-al-Din says that, generally speaking, the higher the voltage of transmission lines is the more economical these lines are. This is the theory followed in Europe where electric line tension is over 1000 kilovolts.

The 400-kilovolt project underway in Syria can transmit electric power equal to the present power consumption of about 800 megawatts. Herein lies the importance of this project which will feed the country's southern part and improve the transmission of power generated at al-Furat Dam.

What gives this project great significance is a future plan to link Syria to neighboring countries by a 400-kilovolt line. The economic advantage of such a network lies in the utilization of surplus power in each country at certain hours. In cases where a time difference exists between one country and another, say one hour difference, one country would supply the other with electric power for one hour in the morning and would get it back in the evening. This is a simple and limited example of power exchange between neighboring countries. So far as our country is concerned, completion and utilization of this project is considered a very vital matter because it will feed Damascus and the southern area of the country.

Project's Stages of Implementation

Study of the 400-kilovolt project was completed through the Belgian company, ("Traksonan,") and basic materials were imported from Czechoslovakia. The project's overall cost is about 130 million Syrian pounds, 44 million of which went to the Syrian Networks Company for its share of the work. The project's implementation stages got underway in April 2 years ago. Its line extends from Hamah station to 'Adrah station near Damascus, passing through Fayruzah station near Hims. The Fayruzah-Damascus line is composed of 346 towers and the project was completed despite difficulties faced in importing material.

The line will be loaded with 400-kilovolt tension upon completion of the necessary transformer stations to be constructed in Hamah by 1985 in accordance with a plan drawn up by the General Electricity Establishment.

Papers from Archives

A basic modification introduced by the Syrian Networks Company to the project's technical study was a change in the method of tower assembly. The basic study for the 400-kilovolt line called for the tower to be assembled vertically. But following a study of this line the company decided to follow the horizontal method of assembly by reinforcing the tower with additional temporary iron sections at the weak points whereby the tower could be assembled horizontally on the ground and then raised by means of a mast and bulldozer. After the tower is erected, the additional iron supports are removed and the tower's original parts put back. The purpose of adding these sections is to strengthen the tower so as to be able to resist pressures while being raised from the ground,

which was the main reason why experts avoided this method. Actually these experts remained unconvinced of this method of horizontal assembly until the last minute, according to Mr al-Shahabi. They observed the initial assembly with doubt and caution, expecting bad results and sure failure. These experts observed the raising of the first tower off the ground from afar, waiting for a disaster to happen. But after the success of assembling the tower horizontally and raising it on the ground surface, they expressed their admiration and appreciation for the skill and experience of the Syrian engineers. About the advantages of horizontal assembly, Mr Shahabi says that horizontal assembly saves time, adds to workmen's safety and cuts costs. For example, the upright tower is composed of 1,300 connection angles joined together with 3,000 bolts and nuts. Vertical assembly of these parts at high altitudes (average height of a tower is 35 meters) requires a long time, not to mention the danger to workers. Moreover, vertical assembly of the tower in accordance with studies prepared by foreign experts requires 20 workers, a number of ordinary and "basket" cranes and 4 anchoring wires. All these elements can only service one work shop which must work three consecutive weeks to finish one tower. In this horizontal assembly method employed by the company, one crane can service four horizontal assembly groups, each one requiring 5 days at the most to finish assembling the tower horizontally and one-half day to raise it off the ground, including removal of additional supporting sections and replacement of the tower's four parts. Moreover, one horizontal assembly group comprises only 12 individuals. Foreign experts bet on the failure of such a method for assembling towers and expressed great oral and written reservations, noting that the tower could not withstand [wind] resistance due to the weakness of its basic elements. Company engineers overcame this aspect by conducting necessary studies to reinforce the tower with additional studies to prevent distortion of basic corners and tower parts during erection. Mr Shahabi says that our development in this country is still in need of foreign expertise in certain fields but we must not forget our local capabilities which very often are better than foreign ones.

Project Contributes to Development of Technical Expertise

We pointed out that the 400-kilovolt project was carried out by local technical expertise and said that the work of foreign experts was strictly supervisory. The fact is that a project such as the 400-kilovolt project led to the creation of a highly-developed technical cadre qualified to carry out similar projects in the future, both in Syria and in neighboring countries. This leads us to emphasize this issue which has become an urgent requirement for all public sector companies.

Minister of Electricity Interview

Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 12 Oct 83 p 5

[Interview with Ahmad 'Umar Yusuf, Syrian Minister of Electricity, by Samir Sarim: "Concerns About Electricity Raised in Talk with Minister of Electricity; True Crisis is in Production and has Objective Reasons; We are Seeking

to Overcome the Crisis and Citizens Must Cooperate"; date and place not specified]

[Text] Shortly after public talk about the power crisis began, we contacted the minister of electricity to ask for an appointment to talk about the electricity situation, about the justification for the cutting of power, about the water level of al-Asad Lake and its impact on production and about questions revolving around the unexpectedness of such a crisis and what to do to avert it.

The meeting was being postponed sometimes because of us and other times because the minister was out of town. We don't know if the postponement was our good or bad luck because AL-THAWRAH came out with a lengthy report about power disruptions, citing some figures. We admit that the contents of this report were the basis of our interview with the minister of electricity.

We do not wish to give the idea that we are publishing a reply through TISHRIN to what has been published. The ministry is quite capable of that and must reply if it wished to, the report--any report--in the same newspaper that published it. We also appreciate the great efforts of our two colleagues who wrote about the subject.

We say therefore that the report of our colleagues helped us to further our information on the situation of electric power in the country in general. We also admit that this enabled us to better discuss the subject of electric power in the country.

Before talking about what was said in the dialogue, we must note that we will not end the subject with an opinion or a result. Rather, we will leave it up to the readers, power experts in particular, to decide whether or not a crisis exists. I admit that the minister made a great effort to explain some technical data related to the subject of power generation, transmission and consumption needs expertise to come out with an indictment or satisfaction. Hence, I leave it up to the reader to make such a decision.

Data

1. We begin first with data available to us to the effect that the present steam-gas power plants are capable of generating power in excess of the country's consumption.
2. The al-Thawrah-al-Furat Dam plant is afflicted with technical failures.
3. Mismanagement and failure to make a decision to operate plants at capacity.

Published figures on plant capacity, with the exception of the al-Thawrah plant, note that it is 30,408,000 kilowatt-hours. With the al-Thawrah plant it is about 49,608,000 kilowatt-hours, keeping in mind that the country's current need is estimated at about 19,000,000 kilowatt-hours.

Theoretically, therefore, there is no crisis with or without al-Furat Dam. Why then is there talk about a crisis? Why is power being cut off from homes? Why...why?

If the talk is contrived and unjustified, we add our voices to those demanding creation of an investigation committee. If the crisis is real, or if the country's production is barely enough and data being circulated is wrong, we ask the Ministry of Electricity to do everything it can to find a solution because it is its job to provide power and we don't know who else to ask. We also ask the citizenry, beginning with ourselves, to cooperate with the ministry to ration, and reduce if necessary, their consumption.

The Interview

Following is the text of the interview we held with the minister of electricity, Dr Ahmad 'Umar Yusuf:

[Question] Is there a technical problem or failure at the al-Thawrah Dam plant?

[Answer] Hydroelectric plants all over the world are greatly affected by fluvial water resources that feed their reservoirs. Consequently, they are subject to climatic conditions such as rain or snow. With regard to the al-Furat River itself, most of these resources come from Turkey. It became clear to us after the flood season, that is, the end of July, that this year's resources are below average. According to the design of the al-Thawrah power plant, electric power generated in an average year is about 2.5 billion kilowatt-hours which could drop to 1.6 billion kilowatt-hours in dry years and go up to 3.6 billion kilowatt-hours in very wet years.

In 1980, the dam generated 2.518 billion Kwhrs, and in 1982, 2.922 Kwhrs. In 1983, it is expected to generate from 2 billion to 2.1 billion Kwhrs, which is 300 to 400 [million] Kwhrs below the average. This shortage could have been prevented had we not been suddenly faced with another matter: the Aleppo water source.

Concerning Aleppo Water

[Question] Please explain the relationship of this matter to the Aleppo water source

[Answer] Al-Furat power plant operates within the limits of two water levels which are plus 285 meters and plus 300 meters above sea level, thus al-Asad Lake water can be used to generate power up to level plus 285 meters. Also, the Aleppo water source was designed to work at the same level. We were surprised last August, as was the Ministry of Irrigation, to find out that, due to accumulated silt nearby, the Aleppo water source would not operate at a water level below plus 292. Consequently, a section of lake water 9 meters high estimated at 3 billion cubic meters capable of generating about 300 million kwhrs, which is in excess of the amount of power expected to be cut off, could not be utilized.

In other words, the scarcity of water resources on the one hand wasted about 400 million Kwhrs and silt accumulation near the Aleppo water source wasted the opportunity to utilize about 700 million Kwhrs from the al-Thawrah power plant. This represents about one-third of needed power for the last quarter of this year.

al-Thawrah Plant Power Generation

[Question] There was power reduction in August and September of this year. What was the power generation from al-Thawrah plant during these same two months of this year and last year?

[Answer] Power generation was estimated at one million Kwhrs, as follows:

In August, 1982, it was 239 and for this year, 203. In September of 1982, it was 249, and for this year, no more than 96.

Plants' Share of Power Production

[Question] We come back to power generation from all the various sources. What is the share of these sources in securing necessary electric power?

[Answer] With regard to the share of al-Thawrah plant, it was from 1978 through 1983, 84, 71, 68, 59, 54 and 32 percent respectively.

With regard to steam plant, it was for the same period as follows: 10, 22, 26, 36, 40 and 56 percent.

For gas and other plants, it was, in the same order: 6, 7, 6, 5, 6, and 12 percent. The share of total production for al-Thawrah plant is expected to drop 10 percent in 1992.

Need and Capacity

[Question] Published figures indicate that existing plants can produce one and one-half times the country's demand, but the problem is that of management and resolution. How can this be explained?

[Answer] First, one important point must be explained. Production is not related to capacity alone which means that we cannot operate the turbines 24 hours a day because production follows consumption which varies during day, evening and night periods. Furthermore, there are peak operating hours that must be observed in the interest of the turbines. They are:

--3,500 operating hours annually for gas turbines.

--6,500 operating hours annually for hydro turbines.

--5,500 operating hours annually for steam turbines.

Nonetheless, up until the end of this September, every turbine at Mahradah plant worked about 5,500 hours.

Also, it is impossible, for instance, to operate the Baniyas plant for 24 hours to get 340 watts. I think confusion over this point led to some miscalculation. Now, I will answer this question by saying:

The electric capacity built into the general network, excluding the al-Thawrah plant, is 1,077 megawatts generating about 13.5 million Kwhrs daily. All power plants are presently operating at ideal efficiency in view of the fact that only two steam units are undergoing periodic maintenance. Moreover, 12 out of 14 gas units are operating on a continuous basis. As I have already indicated, this capacity cannot be used for 24 hours continuously and anyone who disagrees does not know the scientific rules.

I emphasize here that generating units operate and produce power equal to consumption. When consumers reduce their consumption, there is a comparable reduction in production. This is a daily occurrence because consumption is at its lowest during the night and goes up during the day to peak by evening between 6 and 10 pm. Generating units are required to secure power all day long in accordance with changes in consumption. Likewise, consumption varies according to the days of the week and the months and seasons of the year. For example, present daily power consumption during ordinary days is about 19 million Kwhrs and about 16 million for Fridays and holidays. It is expected to reach 21 million for ordinary days and 18 million for Friday and holidays in December. As a consequence, every network in the world has a factor called load factor. The load factor in Syria (the medium to high rate of draw during 24 hours) is 55 percent, while in advanced industrial countries it is 60 percent. Therefore, power that can be drawn daily from Ministry of Electricity plants is equal to 14 million Kwhrs. Hence, the network needs 5 million Kwhrs to secure power on ordinary days, but, due to a shortage of water resources at the dam, on the one hand, and failure to clean up the Aleppo water source, on the other hand, power drawn from al-Thawrah plant was limited to 3 million Kwhrs a day, which leaves a shortage of 2 million Kwhrs. This is what is being cut off from homes daily.

Why the Factories?

[Question] Why cut off power from production sites?

[Answer] We assure you that we have not cut off power in any way that would affect the citizenry. Three hours a day is not a big problem. Citizens can live with that. With regard to factories, universities, production facilities and hospitals, we have not cut off power from them at all. We point out here that the ministry is working hard to avoid outages on Fridays and holidays in view of lower consumption and the ability of our units, along with the al-Furat unit, to meet this consumption.

Comparison

[Question] You mentioned operating hours that must not be exceeded and you also mentioned that some of our plants are overworked; does not this affect readiness? And what is the world efficiency rate and our efficiency rate. Also, how many units are undergoing maintenance at this date?

[Answer] With respect to steam units, there is only one from Mahradah plant and one from Qattiinah plant undergoing programmed maintenance. As for gas turbines, they have been ready for a long time but we did not put them into operation before the crisis due to their high cost of operation. Now, there are always 10 to 12 out of 14 units in service. On the whole, readiness is about 75 percent which is high compared to the high rate of 60 to 70 percent.

Power and Factories Again

[Question] It is known that factories and production facilities draw an enormous amount of power. Why don't you seek, as the minister of electricity, to have them generate their own power, particularly that some already own generators that are idle?

[Answer] We have written more than once to the Ministry of Industry in this regard, asking it to see that all its generators are ready.

Al-Thawrah Plant Again

[Question] So long as al-Thawrah power plant has a large share of production, why is it not under the Ministry of Electricity, noting that a disruption in work may occur if its status is not changed?

[Answer] The Ministry of Electricity, according to the rules of its creation, is strictly responsible for the production, transmission and distribution of electric power. Actually, the subject of annexation has been and still is under discussion by competent authorities. Consolidation of responsibility is a basic issue in this matter.

The Future

[Question] When we thought about this meeting, we had a basic question which is why have you not thought of the future? Now that the crisis has occurred, how do you plan to avert it in the future?

[Answer] The rate of increase in the country's power demand exceeds all other high averages; it is over 20 percent annually. The Ministry of Electricity has drawn up a long-term plan for meeting this increasing demand up until the year 2000 by constructing nuclear, hydroelectric and thermal power plants.

With regard to hydroelectric plants, [the plan calls for] the installation of a hydroelectric plant at the Tishrin Dam. There is also another plant under construction by the Ministry of Irrigation at the sluice dam. There is also a plan to raise the water level of al-Asad Lake by 4 meters whereby the station's capacity will be increased by 10 percent. The Ministry of Electricity has conducted an overall study for constructing about 30 small dams to generate power in the coastal area in full cooperation with the Ministry of Irrigation.

Regarding steam plants, a plan to set up a power plant near Damascus is under discussion with friendly Russia. It includes expansion of the Mahradah and

Baniyas plants and construction of a plant in the Tartus area and another in the Maskanah area. As for nuclear plants, the Ministry of Electricity is in the process of studying the location of the country's first nuclear plant which will also be constructed in cooperation with the USSR and is expected to be completed between 1992 and 1993. The ministry is also following up research and studies on new sources of energy, solar energy in particular, and wind energy for power production.

Widyan al-Rabi' Plant

Due to delays in the Widyan al-Rabi' plant project to be constructed in Damascus for reasons beyond the control of the Ministry of Electricity, a quick project for power production to be completed in 1984 must be set up to cover the shortage next year. This project can only be done by means of gas turbines which can be imported and installed in a short time--no more than a year--while steam plants require more than 3 and one-half years.

Until these gas turbines are installed, various measures must be adopted to ration and limit power consumption in the various fields. Therefore, we hope that all citizens will cooperate with us to limit consumption and waste.

Rural Power

[Question] Will the current crisis affect your plans for rural power?

[Answer] Definitely not! We will do all we can for rural power in accordance with set plans despite all difficulties.

Waste

[Question] You mentioned the matter of waste. How do you estimate the amount of waste in electricity?

[Answer] The world waste is estimated at about 17 percent of generated power and ours is up to 23 percent, due to long lines and pilfering.

[Question] How can waste in production institutions or government offices be fought?

[Answer] By hoping and praying that we all stand up to our responsibility. Many workers leave their machines on for no reason at all and many government offices leave their lights on also for no reason at all. Sometimes lights are left on night and day.

[Question] Why are there so many failures, tens of failures, in plants?

[Answer] There were only 3 or 5 failures during the last 9 months of this year. Some might misdefine failure which to us means a malfunction that affects the network, noting that there are some short intentional failures due to sudden tests to ascertain generator and network soundness.

[Question] One last question. It has been observed that power is not being cut off from residential areas. What does that mean?

[Answer] The ministry has not cut off power during past days as a result of lower consumption and adequate production for it is known that during certain months of the year, such as October, consumption drops due to change in weather when there is no need for air conditioning or heating. Consumption is expected to rise as of next November and reach its peak in January; another peak is in August.

Therefore, there has to be a reduction of electric heat use so as not to aggravate the crisis.

Finally

It seems that the crisis is still there and can get worse during the next few months if steps to solve it are not taken. Some of these steps are:.

--Total, immediate and lasting attention to the cleaning of Aleppo's sweet water and the pump station in Maskanah Gharb so that it will not be claimed next year that a water level drop to 294 is critical, bearing in mind that the maximum level for this year is set at 292.

--Secure any means of power generation as soon as possible, without red tape but not without measures, either by expanding existing plants or setting up new ones.

--Constant attention to maintenance and less waste, and impressing upon establishments and government facilities to reduce power consumption.

Al-Suwayda Power Outages

Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 30 Nov 83 p 4

[Text] Citizens in al-Suwayda Province are suffering a stiffling crisis caused by constant power outages throughout the province. Suffering is becoming more intense among students who are close to mid-year exams and find themselves unable to study and do homework. A number of officials in al-Suwayda power authority confirm that constant power outages are taking place at the request of the general power authority which asked for a 3 megavolt reduction every evening which affects the various parts of the province except the city of al-Suwayda.

The information and drafting branch office of the revolutionary youth federation in al-Suwayda the day before yesterday held its third ideological debate for 1983 among branch leagues in the presence of comrade Jannud Shibli, member of the party branch leadership and secretary of the youth party, under the title "An Analytical Study of the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party" at the city league's headquarters.

Moreover, the branch general activities office coordinated with the Ba'th Vanguard branch in al-Suwayda a reception for vanguard comrades joining the youth organization. During [the reception] speeches were delivered as part of flag exchange ceremonies. Also, a session for eradicating illiteracy in the village of Hazimah was opened in the presence of a number of comrades from the youth branch leadership and the Salkhad league, in addition to a number of art exhibits in a number of units.

12502

CSO: 4404/201

OVER 7,000 ENROLLING IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 5 Jan 84 pp 2-3

[Text] In line with policy of the party and the revolutionary government for the growth and development of culture and for training of professional cadres in the country, ever increasing number of graduates of boys' and girls' high schools are being enrolled in higher educational institutions of the country.

We carry below on this subject, an interview with Abdullah Sangar, Deputy Minister of Higher and Vocational Education.

Question: What norms are observed for admission to higher educational institutions during the current Afghan year?

Answer: The greatest mission which faces the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, is to change our beloved homeland into a progressive and advance country and to build a new and just society. It is natural that reconstruction of a society is considered impossible without training national cadres. To avoid the problem of lack of scientific cadres in all spheres of our social construction in the future, the supplement No 3 to the law on military draft was approved by the Revolutionary Council of the DRA. All the boy students who graduate from the secondary schools are allowed to attend entrance examination (which they previously were not allowed to go before completing military service).

The approval of the supplement No 3 of law of military draft in this regard is a great revolutionary measure under the conditions in which the great cause for the defence of homeland is the prime duty of every citizen of the country. This supplement is a great leap forward in promoting learning and helps in the training of skilled national cadres. Based on the provisions of the supplement, we allow participatio in entrance examination to all those graduates of lycees and secondary schools who have had the intention to enter the higher educational institutions.

Question: How many students took part in the entrance examination and in how many zones did the entrance examination take place?

Answer: As many as 9,179 graduates from all over the country attended the entrance examination from whom 4,909 were boys while the others were girls.

The teams deputed by the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education have given examinations to the graduates of lycees and secondary schools of 15 zones of cold regions in the country.

It is worth-mentioning that the warm regions of the country had no graduates after the enforcement of supplement No 3 of law of military obligations. Another separate entrance examination will be held in the month of May, 1984 in warm regions to enroll the graduates of these localities to the Nangarhar University and the Faculty of Medicine of Nangarhar.

It is necessary to note that male graduates of 1982 who have reached the legal age of military service, joined army ranks in order to perform their sacred mission towards their motherland, while those graduates who had not reached the age of military services, were enrolled in the Nangarhar University according to the directives of Council of Ministers of the DRA and the consultation of the National Defence Ministry. Of course, the female graduates of 1982 had passed their entrance examination earlier.

Question: How about the graduates who have completed their military services?

Answer: Those graduates of lycees who had joined the ranks of armed forces in accordance with the resolutions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PDPA and decisions of the DRA Government for the sacred cause for defending the homeland and revolution and for annihilating the devilish counter-revolutionary forces, would be enrolled in the universities and higher educational institutions without passing entrance examinations but taking in view the results of their three years studies in their respective lycees. Of course, priority will be given to them in case of candidature for the educational scholarships abroad. So far a great number of graduates who were demobbed from the military service in 1980 and previous years, expressed their intention for continuing their education. Their registration is continuing.

Question: How about the plan of enrollment for the 1983-1984 academic year in the higher educational institutions? Is there any difference as compared to the previous years and how many graduates succeeded in entrance examinations?

Answer: A total number, of 7,165 students will be enrolled, for the 1983-1984 academic year. This figure shows the enrollment of around 85 per cent graduates of secondary schools in higher educational institutions. After the entrance examination, in addition to the night colleges, 2,111 male and 3,419 female graduates enrolled in the universities, institutions and higher teachers' training institutions.

The evaluation of the results of entrance examination which is carried by most outstanding professors of the universities, is to an extent complex matter. The total marks of the examination was 400, but the highest marks scored by the boys were 328 while the highest marks obtained by girls were 300, and we allowed admission to the students who got higher than 185 marks.

If we compare the number of students who participated in the entrance examination and the students who were enrolled in higher educational institutions with the numbers of last ten years, it is unprecedented and shows a considerable increase.

Of course, it should be mentioned that the results of entrance examinations indicate that the level of boys is better than the girls.

Question: How about the enrollment of the sons of working people in the higher educational institutions?

Answer: Further consolidation of political power of working people is the pressing and urgent duty of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the Government of the DRA. In line with this great objective, one third of those enrolled at higher institutions are to be selected from among the sons of workers, peasants and other working people, loyal defenders of the revolution and the demobbed soldiers of the armed forces.

These students are distributed among the higher educational institutions without passing entrance examination, but taking into account the results of their three years' studies. The selection of these students is carried out by the party committees and social organisations. Such students will be introduced by the 20th of January to the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education after the approval of Publicity, Extension and Education Department of the Central Committee of the PDPA. Specific proposals were already submitted to the said department in this regard.

Question: Whether steps have been taken for raising the educational standard of students?

Answer: Our basic duty is to raise the quality of teaching, to strengthen order and academic discipline and to all-sidedly and undeviatingly implement the laws and regulations of the government of the DRA. To materialise this plans were made which enable us to train our national cadres in the spirit of loyalty to the aspirations of the party, the revolution and the homeland and irreconcilability with world imperialism.

CSO: 4600/308

PAPER REPORTS ERSHAD'S VICTORY DAY MESSAGE

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 16 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] The nation celebrates Victory Day today (Friday) with a renewed pledge to consolidate independence and sovereignty. On this day 12 years ago the valiant sons of the soil won a nine-month-long War of Liberation and the occupation forces surrendered to the allied forces.

Today the nation will gratefully recall the supreme sacrifice of the freedom fighters who laid down their lives fighting for the independence of Bangladesh. Rich tributes will be paid to the memory of all those who embraced martyrdom for the cause of the freedom.

The President and CMLA Lt Gen H.M. Ershad in a message to the nation on the eve of Victory Day called for taking a firm pledge to materialise the hopes and aspirations of the martyrs of Liberation War. Gen Ershad ordered immediate release of all the freedom fighters who were convicted or are under trial on various charges other than treason.

The day begins with a 31-gun salute.

Improved diet will be served in jails and hospitals throughout the country.

President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen H. M. Ershad will take salute at a colourful parade to be held at 9 a.m. today (Friday) at Sher-e-Banglanagar. The President will also place wreaths at Savar National Mausoleum on behalf of the nation in the early morning of the day. The BDR will hold a Tattoo Show at the Dhaka Stadium at 6 p.m. on the day.

CSO: 4600/1432

PAPER PRINTS TEXT OF ERSHAD'S ID MESSAGE

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 18 Dec 83 pp 1, 16

[Text] The President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Lt Gen H. M. Ershad on Saturday night called for taking a fresh pledge to build a happy and prosperous country by materialising the great ideals of the Bishwa Nabi, reports BSS.

In a message on the eve of Eid-e-Miladunnabi, the President said, Islam has taught us that the spirit of brotherhood, tolerance, understanding and sincere goodwill are the preconditions for achieving national progress and prosperity.

Gen. Ershad appealed to all for continued unity and solidarity for establishing Bangladesh as a self-respecting nation in the world as well as to ensure overall development and progress of the country.

The President said, "on this great day of sacred Eid-e-Miladunnabi, I convey my salam and sincere good wishes to the countrymen and the Muslim world. Our dear Prophet Hazarat Mohammad (SN) is the greatest man of all times. So this sacred day which is connected with the memory of his birth and death is not only a very significant day for the Muslim Ummah but also for the whole world. The great ideal set-up by our dear Prophet in emancipating the mankind has been honoured by the world community for ages. There is no alternative but to follow the ideals of equality, brotherhood and peace showed by our dear Prophet to free the human society from hatred, enmity, deprivation, unrest, indiscipline, and degeneration of moral values which have engulfed the human society today in every part of the world. The emancipation, progress, prosperity and future security of the world humanity lay in the complete materialisation of the teachings of the Holy Quran and ideals of our Prophet.

Being the second biggest Muslim country of the world the ideals of our dear Prophet have been kept aloft and enkindled in the depth of our national entity. The nation today is realising the utmost necessity of reflecting the Islamic ideals and values in our social and state life. Islam has taught us that the spirit of brotherhood tolerance, understanding and sincere goodwill are the preconditions for achieving national progress and prosperity. The great ideals set up by our dear Prophet in building a strong country and nation by materialising the great teachings of Islam in reality still remained an immitable example before the world. So on this great day of Eid-e-Miladunnabi we have to take a pledge afresh to build a happy and prosperous country by materialising the great ideals of the Bishwa Nabi.

Bangladesh has been working shoulder to shoulder with the world and specially with the fraternal Muslim countries for eradicating hunger, poverty, ignorance and conflicts from the face of the earth. The bold role being played by Bangladesh for achieving peaceful solution to the problems of Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq-Iran war received high commendations of the Islamic Ummah. The successes of the just concluded 14th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Dhaka has further consolidated our relations with the Muslim world. The achievement of this honourable position of Bangladesh in the world has been possible as a result of our united efforts and sincere goodwill. The tradition of this united effort has to be maintained for establishing us as a self-respecting nation in the world as well as to ensure development and progress of the country. So, on this sacred day I fervently appeal to all for continued unity and solidarity.

Let Allah the Merciful give us strength to build a peaceful, happy and healthy human society following the path shown by our dear Prophet."

CSO: 4600/1433

MEMBERS OF JANADAL CENTRAL EXECUTIVE APPOINTED

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 21, 22 Dec 83

[Article by Matiur Rahman Chowdbury]

[21 Dec 83 pp 1, 8]

[Text] A 159-member Janadal executive council has been formed.

In a list hung at the House No 30 Road No 4, Dhanmondi yesterday the names appeared yesterday it was antedated November 27, 1983. The house was earlier allotted to former president and chairman Janadal central convening committee Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury but is now being used as central office of the Janadal. Justice Chowdhury is learnt to have said he is not coming to reside in the house.

Meanwhile, the strength of the central convening committee has also been raised to 500 men. Earlier in November 27 committee there were 208 members. There are no member of the council of ministers in the executive council declared yesterday. But the ministers were there in the central convening committee. When contacted, a central Janadal leader said "ministers were there in the central convening committee and that committee is still valid I know nothing more."

A minister commented: "There is no political activities right now so it doesn't matter where I belong."

It is learnt that a steering committee of the party will also be announced within a week. The 21-man steering committee is likely to contain some political personalities who have not yet joined the party.

After the formation of the new committee, the Janadal leaders had tea with the President and CMLA Gen Ershad at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Former President Ahsanuddin Chowdhury has been appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury is also convener of the Convening Committee. Besides 12 Vice Chairmen have been appointed in the Executive Committee. They are Mr Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Mr Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Mr Ali Amjad Khan, Mr Abu Naser Khan Bhasani, Mr Riazuddin (Bhola Mia), Mr Shamsul Huq, Mrs Ameena Rahman, Mr Redwanul Huq Chowdhury, Upendra Lal Chkrma, Mr M. A. Huq and Mr Anowarullah.

Dr M. A. Matin has been appointed General Secretary and 10 others Joint General Secretary. The Joint General Secretaries include Md Hanif, Abdus Sobhan, Mansur Ali, Sheikh Abdur Rahman, Sunil Gupta, Shafiqul Gan' swapan, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Mrs Qamrunnahr Zafar, Abdul Bari Warsi and Jahangir Mond Adel.

Treasurer: M. A. Sattar, Jt. Treasurers: Haji Mohd. Selim, Harun-ar-Rashid Mollah and Al-Haj Abdur Rafiq. Syeed Tareq has been appointed Coordinating Secretary of the committee.

Eight persons have been named as Organising Secretaries. They are Ismail Hossain Bengal, Shamim Al-Mamun, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Shamsuzzaman Mintoo, Anisuzzaman Khokan, Shah Zabangir Kabir, Ruhul Amin Howlader and Ziauddin Bablu.

[22 Dec 83 p 3]

[Text] The following is the remaining part of the news item published under the above caption in our yesterday's issue.

Joint Organising Secy: Subodh Mitra, Golam Mustafa Batul, Hazrat Ali Sikdar, Ashraf Ali Khan, Moynuddin Bhuiyan, Nazimuddin Al-Azad, Md Shahjahan, Adv. Shahidullah and Shahidul Alam Sayeed.

Information & Research Secretary: Mahbubul Haque Dolon: Joint Information and Res. Secy: Khalequzzaman Chowdhury, M. A. Reza and Nuruzzaman Munna.

Publicity & Publication Secy: Md Ali Tarek: Joint Pub & Pub Secy-Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto; Khaled Khurram and Ahmed Mirza Khabir.

Agriculture Secy: Mia Musa Hossain: Joint Agri Secy Golam Murtaja and M. A. Matin.

Cultural & Sports Secy: Sudhir Kumar Hazra; Cultural Joint & Sports Secy Abdul Jabbar and Nazir Ahmed

Edn & Student Secy: Anwar Hossain Khan Chowdhury; Joint Edn & Student Secy: Golam Sarwar Milan and Mrs Amena Bari.

Office Secy: Khondokar Manzure Mowla; Joint Office Secy: Capt Nowab Hossain, Tajul Islam Chowdhury and Hassan Ali.

Law Secy: Barister Kazi Kamal; Joint Law Secy Adv Yusuf Hossain Humayun and Barister M. I. Chowdhury.

Youth Secy A. T. M. Rafiqul Islam; Joint Youth Secy Abdus Salam and Shabid Ahmed Khondoker.

Labour & Industry Secy Saidur Rahman Manik; Joint Labour & Ind. Secy Misir Ahmed Bhuiyan and Habibullah Bahar (Ctg).

Mahila Secy; Principal Nurzahan Begum, Joint Mahila Secy Principal Hamida Ali, and Prof Towfiah Karim.

Secy Family Planning & Population Control: Dr S. A. Talukdar, Joint Secy F P & PC Principal Ahad Chowdhury, Dr Shamsuddin and Mrs Parvcen Monwar.

Besides there are 77 Executive Members and eight subcommittees.

Subcommittees

Finance Subcommittee convenor, Ahmed Fazlur Rahman and Jt convenors, Enayetullah Khan and Jahangir Alam and 10 other members. Treasurer and Jt Treasurers, Ex-officio members.

Manifesto and constitution subcommittees, Convenor: Prof Mofizul Islam and Jt Convenor: Adv. Abdul Hamid Chowdhury and Prof Abdus Salam and 10 other members.

Dhaka City subcommittee has been formed with Convenor; S. A. Khaleque; Joint Convenors: Khalequzzaman Chowdhury, Syed Abu Hussain Babla, Helaluddin Ahmed Helal, R. K. Chowdhury, Md Yunus, Azizul Haque Bhuiya, Abdus Sobhan Advocate, Nurut Huda Advocate, Saleh Ahmed, Farid Ahmed, Palash Anwar Moti and Aminur Rahman Jinnah and 73 members.

All Ward Chairmen of Dhaka Municipal Corporation belonging to Janadal have been made exofficio members.

Other members are to be co-opted as per recommendations of the Convenor and joint convenors.

Mahila subcommittee has been formed with Convenor Khaleda Habib; Joint Convenors, Noorj-han Kamal, Nuresh Maksud, Enayet Nur, Adv Hosne Ara Ahsan, Farida Mohiuddin, Shamsun Nahar Khan, Monwara Akmal Khan, Eklima Ara Shara-fat, Syeda Fatima Sayesta Banu, Ulfat Ara Aysha Khanam, Gul Badan Begum, Hasina Banu Shirin and Sultana Zaman and 24 members.

Mohila Secretary & Joint Mohila Secretaries are Ex-Officio Members.

Other members are to coopted as per recommendations of the Convenor and Joint Convenors.

Jubo Subcommittee has been formed with Convenor Enamul Karim Shahid; Joint Youth Secretaries are Ex Officio Members.

Other members are to be co-opted as per recommendations of the Convenor and Joint Convenors.

Labour Subcommittee has been formed with Convenor S. R. Farooqui; Joint Convenors: Abdul Hye, Mokbul Hossain, Kazi Mozammel, Arshad Hussain and Anwara Begum and 34 members.

Labour & Industry Secretary & Joint Labour & Industry Secretaries are Ex-Officio Members.

Other members are to be co-opted as per recommendations of the Convenor and Joint Convenors.

Agriculture Subcommittee has been formed with Convenor F. I. M. Mohsin (Bulbul), Joint Convenors: Abdul Baten Chowdhury and Bazlur Rahman and 11 members.

Agriculture Secretary & Joint Agriculture Secretaries are Ex-officio members.

Other members are to be co-opted as per recommendations of the Convenor and Joint Convenors.

Law Subcommittee has been formed with Convenor Adv. M. A. Rashid and Joint Convenor Adv Shah Md. Sirajul Haque.

Law Secretary & Joint Law Secretaries are Ex-Officio members.

Other members are to be co-opted.

CSO: 4600/1434

PRESS REPORTS DEVELOPMENTS IN JUTE PRODUCTION

Denationalized Production Up

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 21 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Article by Shamsuddin Ahmed]

[Text] Production in denationalised jute mills increased to the extent of 23 percent during the first six months of taking over by their owners early this year.

According to a sample survey conducted by the NEW NATION in 14 out of 30 denationalised mills most of those started earning profit despite high price of raw jute this year.

Managements of these mills claimed that they succeeded in raising production without adding labour and also in reducing the per unit cost by eliminating wastage, pilferage and corruption.

They took over the mills with bank liability ranging upto Tk 6 crore which had been accumulated because of continued loss during the decade of nationalisation.

The managements said the performance during the second half of the current year would be better when they succeeded in streamlining the administration and overcoming financial constraints faced during the initial months.

They said a total picture of the impact of denationalisation would be available by the end of next month when they would submit to the government 1983 figures of production, efficiency and profit and loss comparing previous year's performance under the government corporation.

According to latest compiled figures available with the denationalised mills, Pubali Jute Mills produced 1,356 tons of hessian and 1,445 tons of sacking during January-June period showing 30.9 and 6.82 percent increase, respectively over the previous six months under nationalisation.

Another instance was Quashem Jute Mills where production in the hessian section recorded 1,350 tons and sacking section 1,652 tons representing an increase of 10.26 and 36.92 percent, respectively.

Hessian production in Sattar Jute Mills showed an increase of 27.4 percent and that of sacking 13.67 percent during January-June period compared to that of previous six months.

Encouraged by their performance the government, it is learnt, is considering release of five more jute mills to their former Bangladeshi shareholders. Three of them to be released immediately are two of Ispahani group and the other Jabber Jute Mills.

Program 'Too Optimistic'

Dhaka HOLIDAY in English 31 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Article by Hossain Khasru: "The Weakening Golden Fiber"]

[Text] A high-production scenario for the jute crop sector for the forthcoming season has now been projected. The programme envisages a more than 35 percent increase in production in 1984-85 over the actual level of production at 48 lakh bales in the last season. The total jute acreage, as the programme suggests, will be around 17 lakh acres during the coming season as against 12.39 lakh acres (according to statistics made available by the Agricultural Directorate) during the last season, thus projecting a more than 31 percent increase in overall jute acreage in the country.

Against the backdrop of an alarming shrinkage in jute acreage, falling aggregate yield, stagnating output per acre and poor performance of intensive jute cultivation scheme notwithstanding the jute production programme for the coming season has thus been projected on highly optimistic line. The concrete relevance of the programme, formulated on an indicative pattern after long three hours deliberations at the meeting of the jute consultative committee last week at the Cabinet Room of the Bangladesh Secretariat, to the actual field-level operations by hundreds of thousand individual farmers tilling small and marginal lands under jute remains much in doubt.

The competence and ability of the related extension agency under the Ministry of Agriculture dealing simultaneously with all cash crops in place of the earlier practice of having the extension works for jute done exclusively by a separate directorate under the Jute Division will certainly need to be strengthened now on a massive scale to attain the new production target. Performance of the same extension agency last year with regard to jute crops has however been not at all an encouraging one in this context. The production programme for the last season had initially its target at 70 lakh bales (later revised downward to 65 lakh bales) from the projected 15 lakh acreage under jute. But the actual performance as the estimates had now shown was far below the targets.

Foul weather condition played some odd game last season as it does play every year. But competent sources point out that the damage wrought by adverse weather conditions to the jute crop last year did not exceed beyond 60 thousand tons. Yet then, the actual acreage under jute crop and produce thereof had fallen much short of projected targets. The shortfall as such cannot be explained thus solely in terms of bad weather.

Production Credit

While the support and extension operations for attaining the projected target for jute production for the coming season assume now the most critical importance, the supply of estimated production credit of Tk 48 crores for the same to the farmers well in time, both in the form of cash and kind, will be another major factor having bearing upon the production process. During the last season, jute production credit disbursement totaled Tk 24.35 crore as against the related target of Tk 29 crores. And now the ability of the banking system to provide the needed quantum of production loans to the jute farmers during the coming season will depend much on repayment of last year's loans by the borrowers.

Seed Crisis

Besides, the general support and extension services, including production loans, the availability of jute seeds to the farmers will be another major hurdle in the coming season. The jute growers, according to competent sources, are faced this time with a seed crisis. The seed stock, including new and carried-over ones with the concerned agency of the government, is estimated now at the level of 68 thousand tons for distribution during the coming season.

Meanwhile, the prevailing high prices of jute in the secondary market due to shortage of supplies on a global scale will act as an incentive to the growers to produce raw jute next season. The export price of raw jute, to mention here, has shot up from the level of 290 U.S. dollar per bale in July to 400 U.S. dollar per bale now. Though the benefits of higher international prices have not accrued to any substantial extent to the growers, yet the price at the growers level in the primary markets was more favourable last season than the previous years.

The current projection indicates that there will hardly be any sizeable carried-over stock of raw jute in the country for the next season. This fact alone now dictates the need for providing jute, as the major cash crop both for the growers and the national exchequer, all necessary support. According to the projection of the jute division, any shortfall in raw jute production below 65 lakh bales in the country in fiscal 1984 will cause severe strains in supplies for meeting both internal consumption in mills and external demand. But the question remains, whether the needs at required levels can be met during the coming season through a 35 percent rise in actual jute production over the current year's level in the country.

CSO: 4600/1434

BASIC PHASE OF DECENTRALIZATION DEEMED COMPLETE

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 23 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text] The National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganisation and reform has decided that all the construction work of upazila complexes must be completed by June 30 next year and site selection by December 31 next, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a recent conference of the Committee held at the CMLA's Secretariat with its Chairman and Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator Rear Admiral M. A. Khan in the chair, a Government handout said on Thursday.

With the upgradation of all rural and district headquarters sadar thanas into upazilas, the basic phase of administrative decentralisation has been completed and stage has been set to abolish the subdivisions as a tier of administration.

Maj Gen Abdul Mannan Siddiqui, Minister for Home Affairs Mr A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, Minister for Agriculture, Maj Gen Mohabbat Jan Chowdhury, Minister for Establishment and Reorganisation and Maj Gen M. A. Munim, Minister for Works were among those who attended the conference.

The Committee reviewed the process of decentralisation of administration which had earlier been adopted as one of the major measures towards administrative reforms needed for the benefit of the common people and for redesigning the administrative machinery suited to the requirement of the massive development efforts being made by the present Government.

With the upgradation of all rural and district headquarter sadar thanas into upazilas the basic phase of administrative decentralisation has been completed and stage has been set to abolish the subdivisions as a tier of administration. The Committee reviewed the overall situation and made necessary recommendations to the Government.

The committee after reviewing the progress of construction of upazila complexes decided that all construction work of upazila complexes must be completed by 30 June 1984 and site selection by 31 December 1983.

For accelerating the pace of construction work all powers in regard to selection of site for upazila headquarters and acquisition of land for that purpose would be conferred upon the DCS with provisions for appeal to the Divisional Commissioner against the Deputy Commissioners in matters of acquisition of land.

The progress of construction of upazila complexes is as follows: under construction--153; process of tendering--113; land acquisition in progress--42; and site yet to be selected--16.

The committee also reviewed the working of the upazilas and took a number of decisions.

It was decided that the facilities wing of the Ministry of Education responsible for provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure for all educational institutions ranging from primary to college level would continue unchanged at upazila level.

The structure of the wing beyond upazila level may be examined by the appropriate committee to make it more efficient effective and economical. Similarly the public health engineering establishment at upazila level will continue unchanged in the shape it appears in the upazila organogram.

The question of increasing office accommodation at upazila level by expanding the existing TTDCs was examined and it was decided that at the moment establishment of new TTDC would be attached priority over expansion of old TTDCs.

The Committee decided to ask the appropriate authority to start conducting audit of accounts of the upazila offices immediately with the existing manpower and to prepare a comprehensive audit plan for the next financial year so that the huge expenditure of public money for achieving development conforms to the established norms rules and procedure in vogue and no irregularity takes place.

CSO: 4600/1435

ENERGY MINISTER REPORTS ON VISIT TO THAILAND

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 23 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text] DCMLA and Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud said in Dhaka on Thursday night that Bangladesh and Thailand have reached understanding to cooperate in a number of fields including power and mineral resources exploration reports BSS.

Talking to BSS on his return from Bangkok concluding his three-day official visit to Thailand DCMLA said that experts will come here to import job training to Bangladeshi Personnel in the maintenance of electricity system.

He said Bangladesh has offered Thailand to share her experience in gas exploration. Also proposed to sell gas pipe to Thailand, he added.

The DMCLA who met a number of Thai leaders including Premier Prem Tinsulanonda Deputy Prime Minister Bhichai Ratakul and Foreign Minister Air Vice Marshal Siddhi savetsija was told that the kingdom was eager to cooperate with Bangladesh in fields mutually advantageous to both.

Air Vice Marshal Mahmud said Thailand showed keen interest to purchase for Kingdom's requirement of raw jute from Bangladesh.

Referring to the question of trade imbalance between the two countries, the DCMLA said he was assured by the Thai side that the matter would be seriously considered during the next meeting of the joint commission scheduled to meet early next year in Bangkok.

He said the Thai leaders requested Bangladesh to consider the question of negotiation on off-shore fishing in the Bay of Bengal.

He said Thailand proposed to share their knowledge in the manufacture of mini hydro turbine in Bangladesh.

CSO: 4600/1435

PAPER REPORTS ERSHAD TALKS, PRINTS DENIAL

Talks With BNP Leaders

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 1 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] Intensive parleys are going on between official quarters and stalwarts of BNP (Sattar) to narrow down their differences in a bid to forge an understanding between the party and the government.

The emissaries of President Lt Gen H. M. Ershad and BNP (Sattar) Senior Vice Chairman Begum Khaleda Zia succeeded in arranging more than one meeting between them at her cantonment residence.

Mirza Golam Hafiz, a prominent politician and former speaker is playing an important role in creating a basis of understanding between the government and the BNP (Sattar).

According to a competent source, Gen Ershad and Begum Khaleda Zia in their meeting discussed a wide range of political issues including the prospect of building an understanding between the party and the Government.

The source said that the votaries of the alliance between the BNP (Sattar) and the Government had suggested for building a united political party.

It is gathered that they have made a proposal to make Begum Khaleda Zia Vice Chairman of such a united party and Vice president or Prime Minister of the country.

Besides, a segment of the party led by Shah Azizur Rahman have been carrying on talks with Government functionaries separately with a view to working out a basis of their understanding with the Government also.

Another section of BNP (Sattar) led by Maudud Ahmed and Maj. Gen. (retd) Nurul Islam which was known as a "rebel" group of BNP during the Sattar regime has also exchanged views with the official emissaries.

A leader of this group, Shafiqul Gani Swapan along with some other one-time rebel BNP leaders has joined the Jonodal and now he is active to iron out differences between Gen Ershad and Begum Zia.

On the other hand, both the government functionaries and the 15-party and the 7-party alliance leaders have kept on exchanging their views on different issues in various ways to reach an agreement on the question of dialogue.

The political parties and alliances are likely to be formally invited by the Government in the first week of this month.

According to sources close to diplomatic circles, some friendly countries are keenly watching these development.

Begum Zia's Denial

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 2 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] BNP (Sattar) Vice Chairman Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday admitted her having talks with President Lt Gen H. M. Ershad and labelled it as a "social call."

Addressing a hurriedly-called press conference at the party's central office at Dhanmondi, she said that she had apprised him of the three demands of the 7-party alliance as she was entrusted with the responsibility by the alliance.

But she refused to disclose what the President had told her during their talks. In the face of queries by the insistent newsmen she replied, "You better ask him (Gen. Ershad) to tell you what he had said."

She termed as "totally false, baseless and motivated" a news item of both the NEW NATION and the ITTEFAQ on the discussion between her party and the government aimed at forging an understanding.

She denied having been approached with proposals to make her vice chairman of any proposed political party and vice president or prime minister of the country.

She reiterated her stand to continue with the movement for achievement of the 5-point programme.

The press conference was attended by some other leaders of the party including Capt (retd) Abdul Halim Choudhury, Abisul Islam Mahmud and Advocate Julmat Ali.

Shah Azizur Rahman, Mirza Golam Hafiz and Maudud Ahmed three leaders of the party who issued separate statements yesterday denying their having talks with the government were not present at the press conference.

In his statement Maudud Ahmed pointed out that there was no factional group as rebels etc. any more in the BNP.

Mirza Golam Hafiz in his statement denied that he had ever tried to build a basis of understanding between the present government and the BNP. He further said that he had not talked to any representatives of this government in this connection.

He said that he would take to law against the concerned newspapers for publication of the report.

Editor's Note

It has become difficult for the newsmen to write about politics and the politicians. Many politicians when faced with odd situation resort to contradiction for contradiction sake. This is an universal phenomenon.

In view of this we (NEW NATION) publish less and less on politics and the politicians. The readers, however, want to know more and more about the politicians and the politics. On readers' demand and due to our commitment to keep the readers informed we publish political stories when necessary.

The story of our reporter published on Sunday on the dialogue is factual words for word. As a matter of fact for the sake of the politicians and the politics we did not mention many facts that we are in possession because of we want politics and democratic system in the country.

The above contradiction is the reflection of the overall unfortunate political situation of the country.

CSO: 4600/1442

PRESS STATEMENT BY 15-PARTY ALLIANCE REPORTED

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 2 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] The 15-party alliance issued a press statement signed by Rashed Khan Menon.

He said that their attention has been drawn to various news items on the proposed dialogue between the government and the political parties. Fifteen-party had no reservation to continue negotiations with the authorities side by side the movement. In view of that, we had given time limit to the government to accept our demands by December 26. The government did not take steps in that direction during the time limit. Therefore the alliance had announced the programme for January 4.

The statement called for return of pre-November 28 situation and open politics before the start of the proposed dialogue.

CSO: 4600/1442

PRESS REPORTS BANGLADESH-JAPAN COMMITTEE MEETING

Ershad, Nakasone Messages

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 20 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text] President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen. H. M. Ershad said in Dhaka on Monday that recent changes in the fields of commerce and industry had provided expanded scope and freedom to private enterprises--both local and foreign--to strike a balance between the private and public sectors for ensuring greater prosperity of the people reports BSS.

In a message to the second meeting of Bangladesh-Japan Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation, the President was happy to note that the meeting was taking place at a time when cooperation among nations was becoming increasingly more important as an instrument for achieving equitable global prosperity.

He said that the cooperation between the two countries in commercial and economic spheres had all along been a dynamic and mutually beneficial process. The remarkable expansion of this cooperation in the recent years manifested the vitality relevance and usefulness of commercial and economic ties between the developed and developing nations he added.

President Ershad pointed out that the second meeting of the Joint Committee occurring three years after the first would find positive changes in the climate and conditions of investments and enterprise in Bangladesh. In recent times especially during the last one-and-a-half years the Government policies and programmes had been recast to reflect social aspirations and hopes he added.

He expressed his confidence that the present meeting would help greater appreciation of the meaning and significance of these progressive changes by the leaders of trade and industry both in Japan and Bangladesh.

Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has said that his Government would continue to make every possible effort to promote closer friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and Japan reports BSS.

In a message to the second joint meeting of Bangladesh Japan Commercial and Economic Cooperation Committee being held in Dhaka Mr Nakasone expressed the hope that the current meeting would discuss concrete ways and means to forge yet stronger economic ties between "our two countries."

The Japanese Premier said "I trust that this meeting will contribute further development of friendly relations between the two countries."

Wishing the current meeting great success Mr Nakasone said since the first meeting the friendly and cooperative relations have made steady progress centering on economic and technical cooperation.

In a similar message Japanese Minister for International Trade and Industry Sosuke Uno said that the trade between the two countries had developed very smoothly and the value of two-way trade had grown from about 50 million dollars in 1982.

He said "With its ambitious economic policies of recent years Bangladesh has achieved very real industrial development." He expressed profound respects to the strong leadership provided by President Lt Gen H. M. Ershad and his government and the industrialists. He said that he was confident that Bangladesh would continue to attain sound economic development in the future.

Mr Uno said that Japan intended to continue working to further "our friendly and cooperative relations" by making a positive contribution to Bangladesh's social stability and development through support for the implementation of its economic plans.

He was hopeful that the meeting will result in enhanced mutual understanding and further improvement both quantitative and qualitative in the economic relations between Bangladesh and Japan.

19 Dec Proceedings Reported

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 20 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text] The second meeting of Bangladesh Japan Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation began here yesterday with determination from two governments for finding concrete ways and means to forge stronger economic ties between the two countries.

President Lt Gen H. M. Ershad and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone sent message on the occasion of the two-day meeting of the joint committee. Both the President and Prime Minister expressed their hope that the meeting would find positive change in the climate and conditions of investment and enterprise in Bangladesh and reiterated their pledge for joint effort to promote ever closer friendship and cooperation between two countries.

The Minister for Industries and Commerce Mr S. M. Shafiul Azam made a call for close transnational collaboration between the private sectors for new investments under joint ventures.

Inaugurating the meeting at a local hotel, Mr Azam described the transnational collaboration as a ray of hope for developing nations like Bangladesh and expressed his confidence that such joint venture enterprises would not only meet the demand of much needed investment capital but would also play an effective role in transferring technology from the developed to the developing countries.

Mr Azam called upon the investors to come forward with a stance of commitment and to act as catalyst for more effective, intense and expanded cooperation in economic, industrial and commercial fields.

The inaugural session was addressed by Mr Shafiqul Islam, president of the Federation of the Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries; Mr Kikuo Ikeda, leader of the 38 member Japanese delegation and president of the Nippon Koei Co. Ltd. Mr Mesbahuddin Ahmed vice president, FBCCI. Besides three messages of President Ershad, Japanese Prime Minister Mr Nakasone and Mr Sosuke Uno, Japanese Minister for International Trade and Industry were read out in the opening session.

Referring to the depressing international situation Mr Shafiul Azam said that slow growth and mounting unemployment in the developed countries had resulted in the proliferation of trade barriers and recourse to protectionism and reduction in the flow of economic aid from the developed to the developing countries. He also referred to shrinking export earnings, increased debt servicing obligations and reduce flow official external assistance in real terms.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to continue to provide expanded and greater role to the private sector and to maintain the environment for the promotion of investment. He said government has been providing endless scope for investment and conditions for foreign participation has been so designed to make such investments secure and lucrative. He described the salient features of the new Industrial Policy and said it aimed at bringing forth the best potentials of private enterprise and maintaining a happy balance with the public sector. He also assured the investors that the policy would not cramp but control the spontaneous development of business and industry.

Mr Shafiul Azam said Bangladesh has taken a number of measures to stimulate investments that includes, simplification of sanctioning procedures, one stop service, counselling for the private entrepreneurs, courtesy service for the foreign investors and export processing zone etc. Gigantic stride has thus been taken to restore the confidence and trust of the entrepreneurs, he added.

Ikeda

The leader of the Japanese delegation in his speech lauded Bangladesh's effort in consolidating the social and economic foundations through the implementation of a new Industrial Policy including the privatization of the jute and textile industries and a very ambitious programme of export promotion.

Mr Kikuo Ikeda expressed his firm conviction that the private and direct investment in Bangladesh would continue to increase in response to the very positive efforts which Bangladesh government was making to attract investment capital. He also appreciated the foreign investment promotion and protection act and the creation of export processing zone with preferential treatment. Mr Ikeda also expressed intention in promoting Japan-Bangladesh cooperation in the technical field.

Meeting Makes Recommendations

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 21, 22 Dec 83

[21 Dec 83 pp 1, 16]

[Text] The second meeting of the Bangladesh-Japan Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation ended in Dhaka on Tuesday making a package of recommendations for promotion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries reports BSS.

The leader of the 38-member Japanese delegation Mr Kikue Ikeda and President of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mr M. S. Islam signed an agreed minute at the end of the meeting which was inaugurated on Monday by the Minister for Industries, Mr Shafiul Azam.

Messages from the President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen H. M. Ershad, the Prime Minister of Japan, and the Minister for International Trade and Industries of Japan were read out at the inaugural session of the meeting which was spread into several working sessions.

The meeting elected Bangladesh the next Chairman of the Committee and decided to hold its third meeting in Tokyo at a time convenient for both the parties.

From Bangladesh side a number of prominent chamber personalities took part in the discussions. They included former President of FBCCI Syed Nuruddin Ahmed, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr Zeaul Huq, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr M. A. Sattar and Mr Mizanur Rahman Shelly.

Different working sessions were presided over by Dr A. H. Shahadatullah Member Planning Commission Mr Manzur Murshed Secretary, Industries Division Mr Maniruzzaman Secretary of the Civil Aviation and Tourism and Mr Hosharraf Hossain Chairman Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation.

Mr Takashi Oyamada, Mr Tatene and Mr Suenaga were among others who took part in the discussion from the Japanese side.

Addressing a Press conference after signing the agreed minute Mr Kikuo Ikeda said that the members of the Japanese delegation had a very free and frank and lively exchange of views during the meeting.

He said that the delegation was satisfied with the outcome of the meeting which provided them an opportunity to examine things closely.

Appreciating the measures taken by Bangladesh Government for development of private sector along with the public sector Mr Ikeda said the delegation was impressed by remarkable and outstanding growth achieved by the country during recent years.

Referring to delegation's visit to the Export Fair he said Bangladesh should make aggressive advertisement abroad to familiarise her products particularly

handicrafts. The products have the potentiality of gaining good markets in the foreign countries, specially in Japan, he added.

The following recommendations emerged during the deliberations in the plenary session and panel discussions:

1. Japanese small and medium scale companies should receive adequate financing and assistance from the Government of Japan for joint ventures in Bangladesh.
2. Clearer policies and programmes based on continuing commitment should emerge in developed countries for sustained economic cooperation with developing countries.
3. Bangladesh's tourist attraction should be further developed with cooperation from other countries. Willing and experienced nations especially Japan need to be persuaded to help in this respect.
4. Bangladesh and Japan should consider setting up joint venture industries for producing chemical fertilizer, insecticides and suitable agricultural implements.

[22 Dec 83 p 3]

[Text] Following is the remaining part of the recommendations of the Bangladesh Japan joint committee which appeared partially on Wednesday's issue of the BANGLADESH OBSERVER.

5. Effective technical and financial collaboration, labour-management relationship should be improved. Shortage of intermediate level management should be rectified. Government assistance through fiscal measures and tax incentives should be extended to technical collaboration projects to help the growth and development of such ventures and make them more competitive.
6. Execution of commercial contracts must be smooth and timely without delay or unilateral cancellation and with strict observance of contractual conditions.
7. Bangladesh and Japan should continue bilateral, economic and commercial cooperation and strengthen the industrial and technological components of this process.
8. Guarantee in regular supply of agricultural inputs is necessary for the overall development of Bangladesh. Irrigation projects and dissemination of modern agricultural know-how should receive top priority.
9. With regard to joint public sector ventures with foreign participation the state should help finance such projects, foreign participation may greatly help management of capital intensive industries involving tripartite cooperation and local and foreign contributions. Foreign private investment especially from Japan should be encouraged and further stimulated in the perspective of the changed favourable climate of private investment in Bangladesh. Joint private sector ventures should be jointly financed and managed for mutual benefit of both the parties and their nations.

10. Efforts from both sides should be made to pursue their respective government to conclude an agreement for avoidance of 'double taxation' and protection of Japanese investment in Bangladesh.
11. The preconditions for optimum foreign indigenous and joint private investment are: (A) maintenance of a consistent policy and environmental framework conducive to stable and orderly industrial commercial and economic development, (B) prospects of quick and secure return from investments and (C) congenial and reliable partners in the host country. Efforts should be made to emphasise these elements in the consideration and exploration of areas of joint Bangladesh-Japan ventures. Further gaps, if any between incentive policies for private investment and their actual implementation should be eliminated.
12. All efforts should be made to meet the essential condition for identifying local needs for undertaking gainful joint venture investments in import-substitution industries and projects.
13. Sustained endeavours should be made to secure joint Bangladesh-Japanese enterprise in the promotion and development of Export Processing Zones in Bangladesh.
14. Quality control of products and regular financing would be important in order for joint-Japan-Bangladesh ventures to succeed. Efforts should be made to effectively ensure these.
15. Bureaucratic delays and avoidable lapses impeding early sanctioning and setting up of joint ventures should be eliminated. Concerted efforts to secure this should be undertaken early.
16. To ensure quality control of Bangladeshi exports to Japan (especially of items such as marine food) Bangladeshi exporters should visit Japan more frequently and get a first-hand knowledge of the market situations and consumer taste in Japan.
17. Request from the Bangladeshi side to Japanese trading houses to help market Bangladeshi products in third countries should be given due consideration. Possibilities in this regard need to be seriously explored.
18. Bangladeshi entrepreneurs requested their Japanese counterpart to provide design and technology to help make Bangladeshi handicrafts suitable for Japanese market. It was proposed that a list of exportable handicrafts items should be forwarded through the FBCCI to Japanese firms dealing in such handicrafts.
19. Japan could make efforts to extend technology for rubber cultivation in Bangladesh on a commercial scale so that rubber and rubber goods could become a Bangladeshi export item.
20. Bangladeshi delegates suggested that subcontracting of electronics manufacture be given to Bangladeshi enterprises. Japanese delegates said this possibility could be explored.

21. It was suggested that suitable and experienced Japanese organisations and personnel extend help in terms of finance and management expertise to further develop the infrastructure for tourism in Bangladesh.

22. To strengthen and further expand the market for jute goods in Japan it is recommended that more frequent and closer contacts between Bangladesh and Japanese businessmen be ensured through the representative trade associations.

CSO: 4600/1436

CABINET APPROVES ORDINANCE ON AGRICULTURAL WAGES

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 20 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] The Council of Ministers in a meeting with President and CMLA Lt Gen H. M. Ershad in the chair on Monday approved the Agricultural Labour (Minimum Wages) Ordinance, 1983 reports BSS.

The Ordinance fixed the minimum daily wage for a farm labourer at three and a half seers of rice or its equivalent price.

It provides for formulating a committee of minimum wages and value for agricultural labourers.

The committee will advise the Government on the country's economic situation price index and other relevant aspects taking into account the opinions of the upazila councils and recommend the minimum wage for farm labourers.

The committee has been authorised to recommend a uniform or different rate of wages for different kinds of agricultural labour in various parts of the country.

The minimum wage fixed under the Ordinance will not be subject to any change before three years.

An official press release said that the Government would not allow anybody to pay agricultural wages at any rate below the one fixed under the Ordinance.

The Ordinance provides that anybody violating the Ordinance will have compensate the aggrieved with double the amount of the wage and the village courts will be given the powers to realise the compensation.

CSO: 4600/1437

GOVERNMENT DECIDES ON ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE SECTOR

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 20 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Article by Hassan Abul Quasem]

[Text] The Government has decided to provide technical assistance to the private sector with a view to giving it some facilities hitherto enjoyed only by the public sector.

The decision has been taken to abolish the anomalies regarding the distribution of the technical assistance received from abroad. In an inter-ministerial meeting held recently, the authority has decided to streamline the technical assistance programme and different technical cooperation programme in line with the President's directive.

Under the new arrangement the private sector organisations, profit earning or otherwise will receive the certain percentage of the total technical assistance-vis-a-vis the public sector. The chambers of commerce and industries, stock exchanges, banking, financial and development financial institutions, orphanages, hospitals, Bangladesh Employers Association, and other non-government social welfare organisations will receive the benefit of this new decision.

The private sector organisations will spend their share in training of the personnel, staffs, and also would be able to appoint foreign consultant to learn the procedure, improve feasibility studies and assess projects to develop other management instruments including financial administration of the Development Financial Institutions (DFIs).

While the non-profit organisations which have had the externalities will also receive the same benefit from the government under technical assistance programme, the private sector will also be given loan and allowed to import equipment and spares under the same.

According to a rough assessment, it would require about 20 to 30 lakh US dollars to meet the initial requirement of the private sector. No actual assessment has been made as yet.

The requirement of fund and other technical assistance would be fulfilled from the technical cooperation programme of the Asian Development Bank and International Development Association on (IDA)--a soft loan affiliate of the World Bank.

The share of the private sector is not yet fixed by the government. But under the revised second Five Year Plan there was a provision of distribution of technical assistance by 11:6 between public and private sectors. Under the new Industrial Policy 56 percent of the technical assistance was earmarked for the private sector.

CSO: 4600/1437

FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR BANGLADESH RAILWAYS REPORTED

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 21 Dec 83 pp 1, 16

[Text] Bangladesh Railway has taken up a massive plan to increase amenities for the passengers at a cost of Taka 2.83 crore during the Second Five-Year Plan, an official source told BSS on Tuesday.

Under the plan 49 ladies waiting rooms will be constructed in as many stations in the first phase. The facilities at the waiting rooms will include toilets, water supply and electricity.

Of the total 49 waiting rooms 22 will be constructed in the eastern zone and 27 in the western zone, the source said.

Another 56 railway stations will be provided with similar facilities in the Third Five-Year Plan period, the source said.

Under the same plan, 25 stations in the Western zone and 48 stations in the Eastern zone will be brought under electrification during the first phase where Power Development Board's electric supply line may exist close by, the source said.

The source further said that such decision has been taken as a matter of policy and such facilities would be provided at every railway station very expeditiously.

Bangladesh Railway has also decided to explore the possibility of having second wagon ferry service across the river Brahmaputra. For this purpose a survey has been started to select a suitable location. The survey report is expected to come out within a month's time, the source maintained.

The present ferry service between Bahadurabad and Teestamukh Ghat will also continue.

The wagon ferry service between Bahadurabad and Teestamukh Ghat faces frequent troubles due to erratic behaviour of the river and seasonal shifting of navigable channels. Thus shifting of the ghat at least twice a year has become a regular feature of railway working, the source said.

The survey is being undertaken to examine the possibility of connecting a point near Bhuanpur downstream of present Jagannathganj Ghat with Sirajganj Ghat on the other side with transshipment facilities from meter gauge to broad gauge at Sirajganj Bazar goods yard, the source said.

This would expedite movement of passengers and goods between the two parts of the country divided by the river Brahmaputra.

Referring to other development activities of the railway, the source said that rehabilitation work was going on in the Akhaura-Sylhet line and Brahmanharria-Mymensingh, Dewanganj Bazar line.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is providing financial assistance for the rehabilitation work on the Brahmanharria-Mymensingh Dewanganj Bazar line and the Saudi Government is giving financial help for procuring sleepers in the line, the source said.

The source further said that negotiations were going on with the Asian Development Bank for providing financial assistance for the rehabilitation work on Khulna-Parbatipur line. The Dhaka-Chittagong line has already been completed, he said.

Regarding the setting up of new railway stations, the source said that a station will be set up at Bhanga soon. For this purpose a five mile railway track will be constructed from Pukhuria to Bhanga, he said.

The source said that the construction work on railway tracks from Gualando to Daulatdia Ghat will be completed within a month.

The source said that a work shop for carrying out heavy repairs of diesel locomotives will be set up at Parbatipur with Saudi Government assistance, the tender has been floated and the workshop is likely to start functioning in 1986.

He said that due to the absence of such heavy repair workshop the old diesel engines could not be overhauled for a long time.

The railway, at present, have five workshops, two main workshops at Syedpur and Pahartalj and the rest three diesel locomotives repair workshops at Parbatipur, Dhaka and Pahar tali.

About the railway carriage, the source said that 120 new passenger carriages are likely to arrive soon as the negotiations have reached the final stage. He said the workshop at Syedpur has so far produced 49 carriages.

CSO: 4600/1437

PRESS REPORTS VISIT OF ESCAP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Interview With Kibria

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 23 Dec 83 pp 1, 12

[Article by Moazzem Hossain]

[Text]

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as the largest inter-Governmental regional body under the UN system is now in the process of reordering its priorities for giving a strong emphasis on combating the challenge of poverty. As the UN regional wing dealing with development issues in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP intends to provide through its future programmes for co-operative and collaborative action a greater thrust on making concerted efforts to reduce urban-rural disparities and to help the region's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other disadvantaged nations.

Mr S.A.M.S. Kibria Executive Director of ESCAP has taken concrete steps over the last seven and a half months to refashion ESCAP's functional role following the endorsement of the new guidelines for the Commission by the annual ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in April last.

The Executive Director, a former Bangladesh Foreign Secretary, is now in Dhaka on a 10-day official visit. He explained ESCAP's new role and the Commission's view of the region's prospects for socio-economic progress in an exclusive interview with the Bangladesh Observer in Dhaka on Thursday. And here are the excerpts from the interview:

Q—In what ways, you expect ESCAP will be more effective

beyond its usual image as a mere regional consultative and advisory body operating within the barren dynamics of present-day international conference diplomacy within the UN system to fulfil its new functional role to combat the massive problems of rural poverty in the region, particularly in the seven regional LDCs including Bangladesh?

A—We have accepted new the eradication of poverty in the region as the highest priority of our programme. And this priority is reflected in our determination to assist the poorest and the LDCs within the region and the poorest sections of society with those countries. These are in fact the two most important criteria for our action programmes in different areas covering commodities, technical services, availability of expertise, development of portfolio of development projects etc.

We have initiated specific moves to accelerate inter-Governmental consultative process in commodities like jute. We have promoted international and regional agreements on commodities like coconut, timber, pepper, rubber etc. The strengthening of the Fertilizer Advisory, Development and Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (FADINAP) can be cited as another ESCAP effort to help the developing countries like Bangladesh to keep down the cost of im-

ported fertilizers and to promote fertilizer use, especially by smallholders.

We have assumed a new executive role to promote regional and sub-regional economic co-operation. We will be too willing to extend every support to regional groupings like South Asian Regional Co-operation (SARC), if all the seven regional South Asian countries make the request to us.

Q—In view of the extremely poor performance of Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) adopted three years ago for alleviating the distressing economic plight of the LDCs what is ESCAP's programme for arresting the worsening economic situation in the seven regional LDCs?

A—SNPA is indeed the basis of our activities for LDCs. I have established a special section at ESCAP to deal with the problems of LDCs. Unfortunately, SNPA needs large funds for its implementation which are not forthcoming. It is a pity that after the Paris conference in September 81 the international aid climate has deteriorated. UNCTAD and UNDP have been entrusted with the task of mobilising resources and we are cooperating with these agencies. In this effort we are focusing our attention particularly in those areas which have clearly been indicated to be the responsibility of the regional UN agencies.

Q—ESCAP has had held several rounds of discussions consultations and studies on various proposals having bearing upon regional food security arrange-

ments. Would you throw some light on the latest development in this particular area?

A—The latest position is that FAO has now taken up the matter and has established the Regional Food Security Commission. ESCAP is actively co-operating in this connection to fulfil its part of obligations and responsibilities. The current emphasis is on having sub-regional food security systems and on promoting closer linkages between and among such sub-regional systems for their eventual integration on regional and global scales.

Q—Seven and a half months are over after the 39th ministerial conference of ESCAP in Bangkok. In what ways, the environment for economic growth and social progress in the region has changed since then?

A—Regional economic prospects are coming up because of the recovery in the United States and other developed countries. There is an improvement in commodity prices. But how far it can be sustained is difficult to assess at this moment. The recovery has not been uniform throughout the western world. Although there has been a change in the global economic prospects after the recent and severest recession in the global economy, the aid climate remains very bleak. I feel there is an urgent need for a change of this particular situation.

Q—The last ESCAP ministerial meeting adopted a resolution urging the rich industrialised nations and the multilateral financial agencies to help the regional LDCs in particular. How far the concerned agen-

cies and countries have responded to ESCAP's urging?

A—I must admit that the response has not been encouraging at all. The aid situation remains really dismal. The developing countries in the region as much as in other regions should now place more emphasis on greater economic and technical cooperation among themselves. The experience has proved that exclusive reliance on developed countries has been a disappointing one. So the developing countries must establish mechanisms to promote cooperation among themselves. Self-reliance through Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECSDC) and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) is the only answer to the situation.

Q—What are the concrete prospects for regional co-operation for economic and social progress in the ESCAP region? Economic co-operation is certainly something more than a common market or a customs union. It encompasses joint planning investment co-operation production sharing, management coalition and technical and financial co-operation. In this context, how do you intend to force and promote greater economic co-operation in ESCAP region?

A—The need for cooperation and collaboration with regard to Asia and Pacific region is greater. Such cooperation is necessary particularly in areas of commodity prices and exports of commodities. The access to developed markets is difficult now. The protectionist trend is a frustrating experience of the developing countries. Concerted action is the imperative need of the hour to attain the goal of free trade which fuelled the growth

of world economy over the last three decades.

I proposed at the last ESCAP ministerial meeting for an Asian economic summit. I still believe that there exists a strong ground for such a summit where the Asian leaders would be able to look at the future of the region with courage and confidence. The summit will go a long way in forging greater unity among the Asian countries in spite of many difficult political problems that exist. In the global economic field, Asia can play a pioneering role if the leaders of the region look ahead to their future in the context of the interests of the whole region particularly the toiling masses of the region. Such a summit will pave the way for using collective strength of Asia to get better terms. But, I must say that the response to the proposed Asian economic summit is not yet encouraging.

Q—What is your purpose of current visit to Bangladesh? Would you like to make some observations on the current development efforts focussing on rural uplift and improving the socio-economic conditions of the teeming millions in rural Bangladesh?

A—This visit is purported to force greater co-operation between ESCAP and Bangladesh. On its part, ESCAP will continue to extend its support to Bangladesh in the latter's efforts to bring about socio-economic improvements. This has been a very fruitful and extremely useful visit on my part as the Executive Director of ESCAP. The eradication of poverty is ESCAP's primary objective which is also the avowed development goal of the Government of Bangladesh.

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 23 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text]

Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), yesterday called upon the private investors to take full advantage of the government facilities provided to the private sector. He also assured all cooperation from ESCAP to expand the private sector.

He was addressing a joint meeting of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Bangladesh Shippers Council.

He said the private individuals have been allowed to free play and the ground is well prepared for take-off. The point, however, is to put the factors of production together.

Expressing his deep satisfaction, over the government incentives to the private sector, Mr. Kibria said even socialist system is not free from private enterprises. He lauded the export-led growth strategy of the government and said the import-substitution strategy results in economic stagnation, poverty, hunger and income distribution. The private sector, he said, has the unique advantage of exploiting the wage differentials, enormous manpower and the natural resources in Bangladesh.

Describing the changing role of the ESCAP, Mr. Kibria said 'in all technical areas we are always at your service.' The ESCAP is now prepared to take up specific projects and offered its service for enhancing local expertise for conducting

complex system of negotiation with the giant transnational corporations.

He emphasised the need for replacing present system with the quick responsive mechanism to avoid bureaucratic tangle in the overall performance specially involving with the shipowners, port management officials, customs officials and shippers.

He referred to the ESCAP's recent undertaking of an in-depth study of the customs barriers, bill of lading and other matters with the help of European Economic Commission.

The ESCAP Executive Secretary lauded the notable upswing in recent private investment in banking and manufacturing sector with the increased interest shown by foreign companies.

He noted with satisfaction the measures taken up in the new Industrial Policy of the government and described it a comprehensive policy with striking similarity with the policy of ESCAP which is aimed at improving absorptive capacity and manufacturing capability.

He said regarding industrial growth, ESCAP's technical assistance, advisory services and training encourage the development of infrastructure, manpower, entrepreneur's skill and also promote technology transfer, sound investment policies and careful government planning. Mr. Kibria mentioned the ESCAP's cooperation in undertaking a feasibility study to identify

troubled industries on which to concentrate technical assistance for improving their production efficiency as well as their finished products.

ESCAP is now investigating the means of carrying out studies in two selected catalyst industries like leather tanning and medical herbs processing, he added. He declared that ESCAP had been making effort to establish a regional centre at Dhaka for the development of appropriate technology for inland water transport. With the help of UNDP and other donors the centre will go into operation by the middle of 1984, he added.

Mr. Kibria also spoke of the global economic scene and its worst, lingering effects in the ESCAP region, specially in the 36 low-income countries.

The ESCAP Executive appreciated the government's concerted efforts in agriculture, population control, energy and education and its favourable impact on foodgrain production and the progress achieved in reducing the population growth rate. Besides he also referred to the gloomy side of large trade deficit and heavy concentration of raw jute and jute manufactures and a one third drop in the country's trade between 1980 and 1982.

Mr. Zaful Huq, President of the Metropolitan Chamber and its Vice-Chairman Mr. S H Kabir and Mr. A S F Rahman, Shippers Council of Bangladesh spoke on the occasion.

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 28 Dec 83 p 8

[Text]

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will continue to offer its technical advisory and consultancy Assistance and support to Bangladesh in the latter's efforts for socio-economic development. As the UN executing agency for inter-country programmes, the Commission will be all too keen in assisting the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC) in all conceivable fields coming within its jurisdiction if and when requested by the member nations of SARC.

This was stated by Mr S.A. M.S Kibria, Executive Secretary of ESCAP at a Press conference in Dhaka on Tuesday at the United Nations Information Centre.

Giving a review of his 10-day long official visit to Bangladesh the ESCAP Executive Secretary a former Bangladesh Foreign Secretary, said that his visit was purported to have a first hand knowledge of the development activities going in Bangladesh and find out concrete ways and means for further strengthening ESCAP's partnership with Bangladesh in the development process.

He disclosed that a good number of proposals were received from the Bangladesh side for ESCAP's support and involvement. The new proposals he said included the requests for ESCAP's technical and expertise services in areas like studies on optimal facilitation of Bangladesh's exports through measures like export credit guarantee scheme and separate export bank, forging closer linkage between large and small industries particularly in the private sector, preparation of a master plan for development of water resources, maximum utilisation of facilities under the complex and intricate generalised system of preferences and development of rural growth centres. He added that ESCAP was already involved in an intangible way through consultancy technical and advisory services in a good number of on-going development projects

in Bangladesh.

Mr. Kibria stated that a regional inland water transport centre primarily for the development of appropriate technology in the related line would be set up in Bangladesh under ESCAP programme of cooperation.

The ESCAP Executive Secretary stated that his organisation 'has been studying with keen interest the programme for administrative decentralisation and development devolution with special emphasis on setting up of rural growth centres in Bangladesh'. This is a very important programme from ESCAP's point of view to tackle the massive problems of rural poverty in Asia he noted while pointing out that ESCAP is now working on developing a model of rural development in which the rural people particularly those of small and modest means will themselves take the initiative for their development.

Giving a narrative of the organisational role of ESCAP as the regional arm of the United Nations, he said that the organisation was now the executing agency of inter-country programmes in the region. A large number of functions which were earlier centralised at the UN headquarters in New York had now devolved on ESCAP after the decentralisation of UN functions since 1977. He claimed that ESCAP acted now as the Asian Parliament as there was no other regional organisation in Asia like the OAU in Africa and OAS in America. He pointed out that a good number of concrete projects institutions and agreements had been set up at the initiative of ESCAP. These included Asian Development Bank Asian Re-Insurance Corporation Asian Highway Asian Railway and different commodity agreements, he added.

SCIENTISTS NOTE CONTINUING DEGRADATION OF SOIL

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 24 Dec 83 pp 1, 12

[Text] Contrary to popular belief that Bangladesh soil is highly fertile, scientists at a symposium on Friday expressed serious concern at the continued degradation of the soil due to erosion, salinisation, water logging and loss of nutrients by intensive cropping.

Emphasis was given on the urgent need to deal with the soil constraints which are preventing new high potential crop varieties from producing to their full genetic capabilities.

Dr M. Amirul Islam, former Vice Chairman, BARC in his paper presented at a two-day seminar organised by BARC in celebration at its 10th anniversary in Dhaka, underscored the need for improving the condition of "problem soils" expanding over an area of 16 million acres, through extensive research. The "problem soils area" is equivalent to over 75 percent of the net cropped area of the country. Dr Islam suggested that productivity of the problem soil and other soils could be increased by improving the fertilizer use efficiency, exploiting biological nitrogen fixation and using micronutrients to the soils deficient in these.

He said that at present barely 30 percent of the added Nitrogen and less than 10 percent of the added Phosphorous were utilised by the plant and the rest quantities were either lost from soil or retained by the soil in a fixed form, not available to the standing crop.

Dr Islam said that if at least 20 percent more efficient fertilizer could be ensured, the net return in terms of production have been gigantic.

He said that there was an ample opportunity to improve soil fertility and increase crop production by reducing sole dependence on the production of energy-intensive chemical fertilizers, he suggested that blue green Algae and Azolia could be used as fertilizer supplements in paddy fields and while Rhizobium species, a Nitrogen fixing bacteria, for other non-rice crops could be used.

Dr Islam said that blue green algae was used on two million hectares of rice land in seven provinces of India. He said use of these biological means could help farmers save expenditures on chemical fertilizers.

He said deficiency of Zinc and Sulphur had already been established for rice on many soils in the country. He stressed that more investigations were necessary to determine the requirements of micronutrients for different crops on different soil types.

Dr Islam said that application of appropriate micronutrients for different crops and soils should form a regular feature of fertilizer recommendations.

According to Dr Islam, the nature of the problem soils of the country are Saline and Alkali soils (7.5 million acres), Acid Sulphate soils (1.75 million acres), Peat Soil (2 million acres), Steepland soils (80,000 acres) and deeply flooded soils (four million acres).

He underscored the need for initiating research on integrated plant nutrition system which aims at maintaining soil fertility and sustaining increased agricultural production through efficient use of organic manure, chemical fertilizers and biological nitrogen fixation.

CSO: 4600/1439

ERSHAD MEETS NEPALESE MONARCH AT DHAKA AIRPORT

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 1 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev and Queen Aishwarya of Nepal yesterday had a brief stopover at the Zia International Airport in Dhaka on his way back home from their month long tour of the United States, Luxemburg, Japan and Hong Kong, reports BSS.

On arrival by the Royal Nepalese Airlines from Hong Kong, the King and the Queen were received at the airport by President and CMLA Lt Gen H. M. Ershad and Begum Raushan Ershad.

Foreign Minister Mr A. R. Shams-ud Doha, senior officials of Foreign Ministry and Nepalese Ambassador in Bangladesh Mr Gahendra Bahadur Rajbhandari were also present at the airport.

Both President Ershad and King Birendra briefly met at the VVIP complex of the airport exchanging views on matters of "bilateral and regional cooperation," a foreign office spokesman later said.

After the 45-minute stopover, King Birendra and the Queen left for Kathmandu by the same flight and were seen off by the President and Begum Ershad.

Earlier as the royal guests disembarked after a flight from Hong Kong they were presented with bouquets by two children. A group of Nepalese nationals staying in Dhaka including students were present at the VVIP lounge.

The King and the Queen of Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal left Kathmandu on December 1 for the month-long trip which took them to the United States on state visit, to Luxemburg on friendly visit and to Japan and Hong Kong on private visits.

Bangladesh and Nepal are close and friendly neighbours and are partners in the 7-nation South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC) launched a few months ago. Both the countries are maintaining excellent cooperation bilaterally and regionally, according to official sources here.

General Ershad paid an official visit to Nepal in late 1982.

PAPER REPORTS DEPARTURE OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 27 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Article by Kazi Montu]

[Text] Five diplomats of the Soviet Embassy in Bangladesh who were recently identified as undesirable by British Government left Dhaka yesterday evening for Moscow along with their wives on a regular Aeroflot flight.

Among them were Grouchetui Gueorqui, Consul-General of the Soviet consulate in Chittagong and his wife Lioudmila, embassy counsellor Eduard Mikhail Schtchoukin and his wife Tamara, counsellor secretary in charge of the cultural section Krivogouz Evan and his wife Nina, First Secretary in charge of the cultural section Romashkin and his wife Mrs Romashkina and assistant attache Alexei Dedov and his wife Larissa.

According to a competent source, another batch of Soviet embassy officials numbering about nine persons will also have to leave for Moscow shortly.

The Bangladesh Government's handling of the problem has impressed knowledgeable quarters with its firmness, according to the source.

The source said that there was an understanding between the Bangladesh Government and the Soviet embassy that the withdrawal of the undesirable Soviet embassy officials would be carried out quietly and in two phases.

And accordingly, the concerned officials of the foreign ministry were tight-lipped on the issue despite insistent queries by the newsmen.

Twenty-four Soviet nationals including the five embassy officials and their wives boarded the Aeroflot flight yesterday from the Zia international airport. Four of them were earlier expelled from different countries on various charges against them.

The other Soviet nationals who left Dhaka yesterday included two diplomats Tchezvonny and Ryzhkin Vladimir who had come to Dhaka only a week back on December 19 and members of a Soviet trade delegation.

It is learnt that the Bangladesh Government has asked the Soviet Ambassador to close down the cultural centre of the embassy by January 15.

Bangladesh Government handed over the list of undesirable officials of the Soviet embassy on December 21.

It may be pointed here that according to a report of the Hong Kong based Asiaweek counsellor Eduard Mikhail Schtchoukin was chief of the Soviet Military intelligence service GRU in Bangladesh while counsellor Krovogouz Even was KGB chief.

The undesirable Soviet embassy officials were reportedly involved in activities beyond their diplomatic assignment in Bangladesh.

It is learnt that there is definite evidence of the Soviet embassy officials involvement in the political turmoil of November 28.

Last year the outgoing Consul-General of the Soviet consulate in Chittagong was stopped from entering into the Chittagong port because of his regular suspicious movement in the port.

The Bangladesh Government refused clearance to the sophisticated telecommunication package (cctv model) imported for the Soviet embassy for direct telecommunication between the embassy and Moscow.

The telecommunication package has been lying at the Chittagong port under custody of the Customs Department.

The outgoing Soviet embassy officials yesterday arrived at Zia international airport well before 4 p.m. accompanied by a number of their colleagues who saw them off at the airport.

They refused to talk to this reporter. When NEW NATION staff photographer Mohsin was taking snaps some Soviet embassy officials who were gossiping with a customs officer remarked "He is surely a photographer of the ITTEFAQ."

The customs officer approached Mohsin to enquire about his identity. When Mohsin told him that he was a photographer of the NEW NATION the customs officer laughingly informed the Soviet men "Your guess is correct, he is from the ITTEFAQ group of publication."

The Aeroflot flight carrying the Soviet embassy officials took off at 6.45 p.m. yesterday.

CSO: 4600/1441

BRIEFS

SOCIAL WELFARE COUNCIL--The Government has reconstituted the Bangladesh National Social Welfare Council for a period of two years with immediate effect as follows says a PID handout. Chairman: Dr Shafia Khatun, Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs (ex officio). Vice-chairman: Mr A.K.M. Hedayetul Haq, Additional Secretary-in charge Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs (ex officio). [Excerpt] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 Jan 84 pp 1, 12]

TRAINING COUNCIL BODY--Government has constituted a 12-member committee of the National Training Council with S. M. Shafiul Azam, Minister for Industries and Commerce as chairman. Other members of the Council are--Minister for Establishment and Reorganization Minister for Agriculture, Secretary, External Resources Division, Secretary, Ministry of Education; Secretary, Finance Division; Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population Control; Director, Military Training; Project Director/Rector Public Administration Training Centre and Chairman, University Grants Commission says a PID handout. Additional Secretary Training and Career Planning Wing, Ministry of Establishment and Reorganization will work as Member-Secretary. The functions of the committee will be to dispose all such matters as require immediate disposal by the Council to examine all issues before placement in the Council meeting and to discharge all other functions that may be delegated by the Council. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 Jan 84 p 1]

NEWSMAN'S ARREST PROTESTED--Mr Ahmed Homayun and Mr Reazuddin Ahmed, President and Secretary General of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists strongly protested the detention of Mr Mohammed Hossain, Executive Editor of DANIK JANAPAD and Vice-President of BFUJ on his return from abroad. The BFUJ leaders said that Mr Mohammed Hussain, a senior member of the profession went abroad with valid permission and carried all necessary documents. But on his return on December 27 last he was taken by the law enforcing agencies to detention without any reason. The BFUJ leaders strongly resented the action and demanded his immediate release. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 Jan 84 p 12]

AMBASSADOR TO SOMALIA--The Government has decided to concurrently accredit Mr M. Mohsin at present Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as Bangladesh Ambassador to Somalia, reports BSS. This was officially announced in Dhaka on Monday night. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 3 Jan 84 p 12]

WHEAT FROM AUSTRALIA--Bangladesh will receive 60,000 metric tons of wheat worth Taka 24.42 crore from Australia as grant under a memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries in Dhaka on Wednesday, reports BSS. The wheat grant is being given to Bangladesh under the 1983-84 Food Assistance Programme of Australia. Bangladesh will bear the costs of transportation and make arrangement for clearance of wheat from the port. Of the total quantity 11,025 metric tons will be utilised for Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme, 20,000 metric tons will be made available for the rural public works under the Food for Works Programme and the remaining 28,975 metric tons will be distributed through rationing system. The net proceeds from the sale of wheat through the rationing system will be utilised by Bangladesh government for development programme. Australia has been a major contributor to Bangladesh's Food Security Programme. Since November, 1975 Bangladesh has received 594,000 metric tons of wheat from Australia as grant excluding the 60,000 metric tons given under Wednesday's memorandum of understanding. The memorandum of understanding was signed by Dr I.S. Mitchel, Australian High Commissioner, and Mr Khalid Shams, Joint Secretary of External Resources Division on behalf of their respective countries. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 29 Dec 83 p 1]

ENVOY TO LEBANON--The Government of Bangladesh has decided to concurrently accredit Mr Mahbubul Huq, at present Ambassador to Turkey as Ambassador to Lebanon reports BSS. [Text] [Dhaka BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 24 Dec 83 p 3]

AMBASSADOR TO BURUNDI--The Bangladesh Government has decided to concurrently accredit Mr Golam Kibria at present High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Kenya as Bangladesh Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi, it was announced in Dhaka on Friday reports BSS. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 24 Dec 83 p 3]

18-POINT IMPLEMENTATION BODIES--December 23--Respective Sub-zonal Martial Law Administrators have selected a 14-man 18-point implementation committee for each upazilas of Chittagong district. In addition of the above 14 executives, four members from each union parashad have also been coopted as members of upazila 18 point implementation committees. The list of selected persons have been sent to concerned upazila nirbahi officers by the ML authority. Concerned UNO's in separate memo submitted the selected lists to Deputy Commissioners for record. Each committee is consisted of one chairman, five vice chairmen, one general secretary, one women affairs secretary, two joint secretaries, one organising secretary, one office secretary, one publicity secretary, and one treasurer. Four persons from each UP have also been taken as members. Selection of city committee and thana and ward committees is also nearing completion, said a military source. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 24 Dec 83 p 1]

SECRETARIAT DIVISIONS TRANSFERRED--The Government has decided to transfer six divisions from the Chief Martial law Administrator's Secretariat to the President's Secretariat with immediate effect. In a recently issued circular, the Government put the administrative control of these divisions--Cabinet Division, Science and Technology Division, Election Commission, Parliament Secretariat,

Sports and Cultural Division, Defence Division--under President's secretariat. These divisions were transferred to CMLA secretariat after the political change in March 1982 and subsequent reorganisation of different administrative ministries. The transfer of these divisions have become necessary following the CMLA's assumption of the post of presidency a few days back. [Excerpts] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 16 Dec 83 pp 1, 8]

NEWSPAPER BANS WITHDRAWN--The Government yesterday rescinded the orders issued in September 1982 prohibiting the publication of ITTEHAD and JOYJATRA, an official handout said in Dhaka last night. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 16 Dec 83 p 1]

RELEASE FROM CUSTODY--The Government has decided to release 203 persons from custody on the happy occasion of the Victory Day. This is in addition to those who were connected with the incidents of November 22 and 28, 1983 and have already been released by the Government, says a Govt handout. The Government sincerely hopes that the persons set at liberty will behave as responsible members of the society and play their part in contributing to the nation-building work undertaken by the Government. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 16 Dec 83 p 1]

CSO: 4600/1443-4

GANDHI LEADS IN POPULARITY OPINION POLL

New Delhi PATRIOT in English 6 Jan 84 p 4

[Text] In 10 out of the 14 State Capitals, Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, has led a popularity opinion poll conducted in December last, reports PTI.

The poll, which was undertaken by the marketing and research group for a leading fortnightly of Delhi, showed that Mrs Gandhi's popularity had increased and was higher than June 1982 when the last poll was conducted by the magazine.

"It, however, shows that the Congress-I, led by Mrs Gandhi, was behind to Janata in popularity in Rajasthan's Capital Jaipur".

In Ahmedabad, the opinion was evenly divided while in four State Capitals, the supporters of Mrs Gandhi outnumbered her detractors by over 50 per cent. Among them were Calcutta and Madras, capitals of States ruled by opposition. Others were Delhi and Lucknow.

On the State of the nation, the poll found that while Mrs Gandhi's backers clearly outnumbered those who were unhappy with her performance, around two-third of the electorate still felt that things were going badly.

A total of 5,715 electors in 14 State capitals were interviewed by the researchers. The opinion could not be obtained in Gauhati and Chandigarh because of unsettled conditions.

Regarding the law and order situation, the poll showed that those who felt that the situation had deteriorated over the last one year were at least twice as numerous as those who were of the view that the situation had improved.

an analysis of two Opposition alliances showed that the Janata Party was clearly the vote winner in the United Front while Bharatiya Janata Party was the driving force in the large cities in the National Democratic Alliance.

In her traditional stronghold of the north, Mrs Gandhi's party had slipped into second position in Jaipur while in the other three State capitals of Lucknow, Delhi and Jammu (winter capital of J and K) the Congress-I also leads. In two of the three western India capitals and in eastern India Congress-I dominates the political scene. The CPI-M is second in Calcutta while the National Democratic Front was second in Patna. In Bhubaneswar, both fronts have an almost equal support.

In the south the Congress-I is supported by 27 per cent to 37 per cent of the electorates in the four State capitals. "It is the strongest party in Trivandrum and Hyderabad. In Trivandrum, the CPI-(M) and the BJP vie for the second position. In Hyderabad NTR's charisma seems to be wearing thin, with the Gelugu Desam and BJP commanding almost equal support.

In Madras, the AIADMK is the leader, though only marginally, with Congress-I second and the DMK a close third. In Bangalore, neither Mally's tapes nor C M Stephen's statements appeared to have significantly improved the image of the Congress-I party. Janata is the clear leader.

Fortytwo per cent of the people interviewed opposed Government's handling of the Punjab situation while 32 per cent supported it. The remaining 26 per cent were undecided.

CSO: 4600/1430

SIKH SECESSIONIST'S EFFORTS TO VISIT U.S. REPORTED

Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 20 Dec 83 p 1

[Article by J. N. Parimoo]

[Text] WASHINGTON, December 19--THE Sikh secessionist leader, Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan, is once again seeking to enter the U.S. The state department is considering whether a visa should be again issued to him, in the face of grave concern shown by the government of India over the readiness of the U.S. administration in granting him a visa on an earlier occasion, even though Dr. Chauhan does not have an Indian passport.

A senior government officer said the legal section of the state department was examining Dr. Chauhan's record to see if there was anything in it to disqualify him from getting a visa. "He has been travelling in West European countries on a British document," he officer said.

Helms' Backing

According to Indian diplomatic circles here, Dr. Chauhan does not have any British document worth the name. "He is only carrying a statement which is generally issued to stateless persons which signifies that the person carrying it will be accepted back by the British government if and when he returns. The problem with stateless persons is that when their visa in a country expires, they have no country to go back to and sometimes the stateless person stays on in the host country even though his visa is only temporary."

According to these sources, it is doubtful if the British government will be willing to issue a statement for Dr. Chauhan this time, if he chooses to return to Britain.

It is learnt the government of India has warned the U.S. government that if a visa is issued to Dr. Chauhan for the third time, it would only lend credence to the belief in some sections of public opinion in India that the secessionist elements are receiving encouragement from the U.S.

Administration officials admit privately that the state department does not want the issue of the Sikh leader's entry to become another irritant in the relations between the two countries "but the pressures are coming from above".

It is explained that in this case the term "from above" does not mean the White House but the conservative caucus of the Republican Party.

One Senator, Mr. Jesse Helms, has been consistently showing interest in Dr. Chauhan and encouraging him to come to the U.S. but, according to one senior Senate staff aide, it is not even the Senator himself but his aide, who deals with that part of the world, who has been building pressure on the state department.

A Senate staff aide told me: "You should have seen how Dr. Chauhan was escorted by a senior staff member of Senator Helms in the corridors of the Capitol Hill building. With his long robe and turban, Dr. Chauhan created the impression as if he was an Indian maharaja. The average American law-maker knows so little about Indian political affairs that some of them must have thought Dr. Chauhan was a state dignitary. They did not even know that he did not carry even a passport of his country."

Dr. Chauhan obtained the visa last time on the pretext that he had to meet his friends here, one of them being the staff aide of Senator Helms. On an earlier occasion, he came on health grounds to consult his doctor in Houston. On both occasions, according to those who monitored his movements here, Dr. Chauhan pursued activities which were at variance with the purpose for which he had sought the visa. This time he has sought the visa again on the pretext of wanting to meet his friends, it is learnt.

Dr. Chauhan may find it difficult to obtain the visa this time or, as a face-saving device, some of his American friends may ask him to put off the trip. According to one administration source, the dialogue between the two governments on the Chauhan affair is going on and it has already become an irritant.

CSO: 4600/1392

REPORTAGE ON PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO GULF STATES

19 Dec Speech in Doha

Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 20 Dec 83 p 9

[Text] DOHA, December 19 (UNI)--THE president, Mr. Zail Singh today reaffirmed India's commitment to the right of the Palestinians to establish an independent state under their "Sole and legitimate representative", the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Addressing the Indian community at Sheraton hotel here, Mr. Zail Singh said India's "consistent" support to the Arab world and the Palestinian cause emanated from principles espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who spoke out against the injustices to which the Palestinians and Arabs were being subjected.

Calling for settlement of differences through negotiations, Mr. Zail Singh wanted total withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories.

Regional Co-operation

Mr. Zail Singh said India has always been advocating regional co-operation as a means of promoting collective development and self-reliance. "I am happy to note that the Gulf Co-operation Council, of which Qatar is the current chairman, is an example of successful regional cooperation," he said.

Referring to the new proposals by the Indian government to benefit the non-resident Indians, Mr. Zail Singh said: "I have seen the magic of this participation during my recent state visit to Kerala."

Referring to the contribution made by the Arabs to India, Mr. Zail Singh said the great teachings of Islam reached the coast of Kerala through them. One of the oldest mosques in the world is in Cranganore in Kerala symbolising the early contact of the Arabs with India.

There is also evidence of similarities in the customs, traditions, dress and food habits "of our two peoples," he said.

Mr. Zail Singh said India, as chairman of the non-aligned movement would look forward to "constructive suggestions" from the government of Qatar for reducing global tensions, promoting international co-operation and tackling the problems of economic development.

Lauding the role of Indian workers engaged in diverse fields, he said: "The worker is as much a builder of modern Qatar as is the seniormost advisor".

Earlier, speaking at MES high school here, Mr. Zail Singh exhorted the children to be good citizens "respecting the laws of the state, where you are studying and also be the bearers of hospitality of Indian cultural tradition abroad."

Offer Welcomed

Earlier, Qatar welcomed India's offer of technical assistance in exploiting its extensive reserves of natural gas.

The offer was made by Mr. Zail Singh at the talks he had with the Emir of Qatar on the second day of his visit to this oil-rich gulf country.

An official spokesman said the Emir was extremely happy at the outcome of the talks with Mr. Zail Singh.

19 Dec Activities in Doha

Madras THE HINDU in English 20 Dec 83 p 9

[Text]

DOHA (Qatar), Dec. 19.

The President, Mr. Zail Singh, and the Amir of Qatar Shaikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, today expressed concern over the growing international tensions with particular reference to developments in the Gulf region, the happenings in Lebanon, the differences within the PLO and the Iran-Iraq war.

During the 60-minute meeting, the first to take place after Mr. Zail Singh's arrival here from Czechoslovakia last evening, the two leaders also reviewed the situation in the Indian subcontinent.

Mr. Zail Singh explained to the Amir India's policy of seeking friendship and cooperation with neighbours and its desire to see them prosper. India had no extra-territorial ambitions whatsoever. The two heads of State also spoke on bilateral relations and agreed that the highest priority should be assigned to promoting South-South cooperation. This was particularly so at a time when there was no progress in the North-South dialogue nor any sign of a new international economic order being established.

The Amir talked about the 'success of some Indian companies and particularly referred to the two tenders recently awarded to Indian companies, worth \$500 millions (about Rs. 500 crores). The proposed multi-million investment for the exploitation of the massive gas reserves of Qatar, the scope for more joint ventures, the industrial and technological achievements of India as also the large Indian

market figured during the discussions.

The President reiterated the invitation to the Amir to visit India. When the latter remarked that he had visited India only recently for the non-aligned summit, Mr. Zail Singh pointed out that it was not a State visit and that the visit should be made. The Amir then indicated that he would visit India in the near future, leaving the exact dates to be worked out through diplomatic channels.

The Tourism Minister, Mr. Khurshid Alam Khan, the External Affairs Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari, the President's Secretary, Mr. A. C. Bandyopadhyay, Mr. U. C. Somi, Joint Secretary and the Indian Ambassador in Qatar, Prof. Sayyed Bashiruddin, assisted Mr. Zail Singh during his talks. Much significance is attached to the President's visit, the first by an Indian head of State, since it is taking place at a time when there are signs of instability in the region. The Indian delegation interpreted the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the President and the extensive coverage in the local press as a manifestation of Qatar's appreciation of India's concern in regard to the problems of the region and its support to and solidarity with the Arabs.

Addressing a large gathering of the Indian community at the Government-owned Doha Sheraton, the latest showpiece here, Mr. Zail Singh, said, India's consistent support for the Arab world and the Palestinian cause emanated from principles espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who spoke out against the injustices the Palestinians and the Arabs were subjected to. India, he said had always been advocating regional cooperation as a means to promote collective develop-

ment and self-reliance, and commended the example of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of which Qatar is the current chairman.

A symbol of ties: Trading the historic link between India and Qatar, Mr. Zail Singh, said the mosque in Cranganore in Kerala symbolised the centuries-old contact the Arabs had with India.

The President appreciated the material prosperity the people of Indian origin had achieved in Qatar through diligent work. He told the audience that India was keen that they kept their relations with their mother country open and vibrant. Recently, the Indian Government had initiated proposals to benefit the non-resident Indians abroad. "I have seen the magic of this participation during my recent visit to Kerala but these are processes which take time to complete," he said amidst cheers.

Advice to Indians: At the Indian school run by the Muslim Educational Society, the President advised a gathering of parents, teachers and students to be good citizens, respecting the law of the government and projecting India's cultural heritage and hospitality.

The school, founded in 1974, is the only one of its nature in Qatar to cater to the educational needs of Indian children. Affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India, it is imparting instructions in Arabic and Islamic teachings, apart from the curriculum. It has about 100 teachers and children from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Iran are part of the student community.

Visits museum: Amidst a busy schedule on the second day of his stay in the country, Mr. Zail Singh found time to visit the Qatar National Museum.

21 Dec Activities in Bahrain

New Delhi PATRIOT in English 22 Dec 83 p 7

[Text] BAHRAIN, Dec 21 (PTI)--India and Bahrain today agreed that urgent steps should be taken to end the three-year-old Iran-Iraq war, which has affected Arab unity.

As at Qatar, here too the situation in West Asia figured prominently during the official talks President Zail Singh had with the Amir of Bahrain Sheikh Bin Sulman Al Khalifah. The talks lasted 75 minutes during which they reviewed international issues and bilateral questions.

There was complete identity of views between the two sides on the question of Palestinians right to self-determination.

Both the Amir and his Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifah Bin Sulman al Khalifah, appreciated the support India had been extending to the Arab cause and stressed it was an example of the friendly relations that country had with the Arab world.

Bahraini leaders feel that India, as the chairman of the nonaligned movement can play an important role in easing tension in the West Asia and use its moderating influence with super powers.

On bilateral relations, the two countries decided to set up committees to look into the specific areas of economic cooperation.

The Amir stressed that the strengthening of Indo-Bahraini economic ties should be within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates the GCC is emerging as a strong economic grouping in the region with a massive oil wealth.

Bahrain leaders showed keen interest in securing supplies of iron ore from India and requested for training facilities in the area of civil aviation.

Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation Khurseed Alam Khan, who accompanied the President at the talks, assured the Amir he will welcome the Bahrain personnel for training in India including the commercial pilots technicians, engineers and air hostesses.

The Amir and other Bahrain leaders commended the role Indians were playing in the development of Bahrain. A large number of Indians employed in Bahrain, they said, were making valueable contributions in this country. The good work done by Indian companies in Bahrain was also praised.

The President, who arrived yesterday afternoon from Doha to a warm and ceremonial welcome in this pearl of Gulf was assisted at the talks by Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry Romesh Bhandari. On the Bahraini side, besides the Amir and the Prime Minister, others who participated included Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa al Khalifah, Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak al Khalifah and other minister and senior officials.

Later speaking at a reception held in his honour by the Indian community here, Mr Zail Singh reaffirmed India's total support to the Arab cause and called for negotiations to resolve the outstanding issues in the West Asia.

Mr Zail Singh assured Indians settled abroad of the Government's interest in their welfare and cited the concessions to non resident Indian investment as an example reflecting this.

Addressing the Indian community here, Mr Zail Singh said these proposals demonstrate the interest the Indian Government has in the citizens and people of Indian origin settled abroad.

Indo-Bahrain Joint Statement

New Delhi PATRIOT in English 23 Dec 83 pp 1, 7

[Text]

BAHRAIN, Dec 22 (UNI).

INDIA and Bahrain today voiced concern over the mounting super power presence in the Indian Ocean against the 'express wishes' of the littoral states.

A joint statement by President Zail Singh and the Amir of Bahrain Shaikh Issa Bin Salman al Khalifa, issued at the conclusion of the three-day state visit of the Indian President to Bahrain, called for 'speedy implementation' of the 1971 United Nations resolution declaring the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

The statement demands the withdrawal of super power fleets from the Indian Ocean.

The statement added that it had become imperative for world peace that the non-aligned countries should strengthen the movement 'by stressing the common bonds' which unite them.

The statement expressed satisfaction at the friendly relations between India and the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a strategic and economic grouping of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

and Oman.

The final day of Mr Zail Singh's visit was marked by consultations between him and the Prime Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalifa, as well as between the secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs Romesh Bhandari and Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak al Khalifa.

Mr Bhandari later told UNI that both sides also agreed that India should be in regular touch with the GCC states not only on regional issues but on all international affairs. The GCC states, with their moderate foreign policies, occupied an important place in the non-aligned movement.

He said that the first meeting of the Indo-Bahrain joint committee on technical cooperation would be held in the first week of April, immediately after the proposed Arab summit. The joint committee was set up in 1981.

About the problems within the PLO, he said that India and the GCC states held the view that infighting among its ranks should be resolved within the framework of Palestinian institutions.

Mr Zail Singh left Bahrain for home today wrapping up a three-nation eight-day visit officially described as 'highly successful'.

The Amir, his Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa, Bahrain Crown Prince and Commander of the Bahrainian Defence Forces (BDF) Shaikh Hamad gave the President a warm send off at the airport. Indian ambassador S K Bhatnagar, the diplomatic corps and leading members of the Indian community were among those present.

Mr Zail Singh, who first went to Czechoslovakia, visited Qatar also. Both Qatar and Bahrain are members of the six member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

CSO: 4600/1392

BJP GENERAL SECRETARY HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE

New Delhi PATRIOT in English 6 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] INDORE, Jan 5 (PTI)--THE National Executive of the BJP today turned down the demand voiced by several members for withdrawal of party's support to the Ramakrishna Hegde Ministry.

Briefing newsmen here after a three-hour discussion on the political situation in Karnataka which ended in the early hours of today, party general secretary L K Advani said the decision to continue support to the Janata-led Ministry had been taken in "national perspective and in order to frustrate the Congress-I toppling game in the State."

The party has, however, authorised its vice-president K S Hegde to convey to Karnataka Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde of the "strong feelings of the national executive about the unhelpful and anti-BJP attitude of his party towards the local BJP so as to ensure that the Janata Party took some corrective measures"

Asked what would be the party's stand if the Janata party failed to take the "corrective steps", Mr Advani said "we hope that they will do so" In reply to another question, he said the BJP national executive has not fixed any time limit to watch the attitude of the Janata party in Karnataka.

Mr Advani said several members of the national executive urged the party leadership to withdraw support to the Hegde Ministry in view of the shocking reports presented by party's State unit president Shivappa.

Mr Shivappa had mentioned in his report the role of the ruling Janata party in the recent civic elections in which it joined the Congress-I against the BJP, he said.

The party leaders from Karnataka including the two vice presidents, Mr K S Hegde and Mr agannath Rao Joshi, however, felt that the BJP should continue support to the Hegde Ministry in the national perspective and also not to allow the Congress-I toppling game to succeed."

Mr Advani said several members who urged the party leadership to reconsider its decision to back up the Hegde Government, drew attention to the fact that the party's Karnataka representatives were not satisfied with the Government's

performance. They also expressed the view that many in the Janata party seemed obsessed with containing and curbing the growth of the BJP.

He said many members expressed shock at several instances where the Janata had joined hands with the Congress-I against the BJP. They referred to the recent civic elections in Karnataka at some places like Udipi. In several agricultural marketing societies where BJP had secured a majority, the Government's power to nominate members was used to subvert the election results and reduce the BJP to a minority, Mr Advani said. This had happened in Karkala, Morcara and several other places, he added.

UNI adds: Later in the night the executive assessed statewise reports on the electoral adjustments, if necessary in the event of early elections.

This followed party chief Atal Behari Vajpayee's opening remarks that a snap poll even at this stage cannot be ruled out. "We must avoid splitting of non-Congress-(I) votes at any cost", Mr Vajpayee reportedly told the executive.

According to party sources, some units did express certain lacunas in the party's alliance with the Lok Dal, but there was near unanimous consensus that electoral adjustments were necessary to avoid splitting of Opposition votes.

A West Bengal representative Jaesmi 1234 123 12 12 123456 pointed out that the CPI-M led Left-Front was losing its popular support both in rural and urban areas and consolidation of non-Congress-I Opposition there was necessary to counter the Congress-I.

The executive session continued beyond its scheduled time to discuss the reports of various States. The draft political resolution will be placed before the national council, which is starting its three day meeting tomorrow.

Besides the political resolution, the council is expected to consider draft statement on economic situation.

The draft resolution on economic situation underlined the need to urbanise the rural areas through intensive rural development in order to minimise the migration of rural poor to urban areas and consequent perpetuation of urban poverty.

The party deplored the attitude of the Congress-I leaders to depict a rosy picture of the country's economy and hide the real weaknesses, shortfalls and failures perpetuated by them.

The executive also adopted resolutions on Assam Punjab and corruption in centrally sponsored development-oriented employment programmes.

On Assam, the executive decided not to boycott the working of tribunals to detect foreigners although it regards the relevant act as a retrograde step.

The resolution on Punjab expressed deep concern over the worsening situation in the State. But on the political front, it ruled out any relationship with the Akali Dal in the future.

PLANNING MINISTER TALKS ABOUT NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 19 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] The new industrial policy coupled with Rs 100 billion industrial schedule was in process of finalisation by the Planning Commission and will be It will be presented to Econo- ready by the end of this month. mic Committee of Cabinet next month.

Disclosing this at the Karachi Stock Exchange, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Mr Mahbubul Haq, outlined major policy guidelines for economic development during the sixth Five-Year Plan. He also spelled out measures to be undertaken to rationalise taxation structure which according to him was too high and needed reduction. He also explained the role of public and private sector.

Agency adds:

He said that the policy which would be a blue print to guide the industrialisation for the Sixth Five-Year Plan, was being formulated after careful considerations. He added that enough care was being taken in its formulation as this exercise was being done after 24 years.

The Minister said that in the new policy, sanctioning procedure for the new projects would be indicated. Policy framework for foreign investment and joint ventures would be mentioned. In foreign investment, emphasis would be on real manufacture and not an ssembly of components participation of local entrepreneurs would also be ensured.

Elaborating, he said that policy parameter for foreign equity and suppliers credit would also be a consideration in it. The new policy, he added, would also indicate infrastructure budgeting and of indigenisation. Regional location policy would also be spelt out in view of the fact that very little private inevestment has taken place in certain regions of the country particularly the NWFP.

Dr Mahbub said that there would, no doubt, the lot of difficulties and set backs but emphasised that it was the committed policy of the Government to forge ahead in the field of industrialisation.

The Minister visualised an era of unprecedented industrialisation in the country. It would be an era of indigenisation, greater efficiency and more social responsibility etc.

Discussing the reasons for delay in the finalisation of the new policy, Dr Mahbub said that it was understandable since Rs 100 billion proposed investment during the Plan would have to be backed up by sectoral industrial projects. A great deal of technical work was involved in it as the document would be a guide to financial institutions. It would provide a sense of direction to the investors, any mistake made would be critical for the country.

He said that the National Economic Council (N.E.C.) would meet on Feb 7 next to discuss the blueprint for the implementation of the current Five-Year Plan.

The N.E.C. will also review the progress of the first six months of the current fiscal year, the first year of the 6th Five-Year Plan.

Hydro Project

A meeting of the Consortium will be held in Paris in April next to mobilise loan for the 400 million dollar hydro-cracker project to be set up in Pakistan.

He said that consortium of private banks had also been invited for co-financing of the project. He added that the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank were likely to provide 50 to 100 million dollars for the project. Negotiations had been done with them.

The Government, he said, also intended to offer certain share to the general public in the country through floatation to raise Rs 50 to 70 crore for the project.

CSO: 4600/305

LABOR POLICY: ISSUES, PROBLEMS EXPLAINED

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 19 Jan 84 p 8

[Excerpt] The deadlock on the issue of right to hire and fire was the stumbling block in the way of the National Labour Policy, Minister for Planning and Development, Dr Mahbubul Haq, said here yesterday.

Addressing the Pakistan Workers Education Institute, he said that tripartite negotiations on the labour policy had been going on since 1980, although work on the policy had started in 1978.

Now unanimity had been achieved on most of the issues involved. However, there was lack of agreement on four issues namely, the right to hire and fire, outside representation in trade unions, limitation on bonus and profits, and the application of the labour laws.

He said that the real deadlock was on the right to hire and fire demanded by the employers and strongly opposed by the trade unions. The official viewpoint was somewhere between these two positions. The Government would like the restoration of the right to hire and fire to the managements with certain restraints, and the right to strike to the trade unions. The restriction on the right to hire and fire would be to the extent of keeping the turn over of employment in factories within one per cent per annum.

Dr Mahbubul Haq expressed the hope that some compromise would be reached on the issue of hire and fire so that it might not cause an unnecessary delay in the announcement of the National Labour Policy.

Dr Mahbubul Haq said that four million new jobs would be created during the Sixth Five-Year Plan period. Out of these one million new jobs would be in the industrial sector, one 1.5 million in agriculture, one million in road-building, trading and banking etc., and about half a million in the construction work both within the country and abroad.

He said that the present labour force was estimated to be 27 million and it was expected to increase to 31 million by the end of the plan period.

CSO: 4600/305

OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS' INVESTMENT SAID INCREASING

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 17 Jan 84 p 1

[Excerpt] The leader of 28-member UK Overseas Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Riaz Khalid, has said overseas Pakistanis' investments in Pakistan continue to increase with the improvement of investment climate and encouragement accorded by the Government.

Speaking at a reception hosted in honour of the visiting delegation by the Editor of Trade Chronicle Mr Abdul Rauf Siddiqui, at Karachi Press Club yesterday, he said the main purpose of the visit was to explore the potential available in this country to enlarge the investments of overseas Pakistanis who still had great stake in the progress and development of this country.

The delegation will also examine the possibility to boost the two-way trade between Pakistan and UK and narrow the trade gap which at present was not favourable to Pakistan.

Mr Khalid who is also Vice-Chairman and General Secretary of UK POCCI said that up to this date the overseas Pakistanis had made investment in 430 projects bulk of which was in engineering and printing projects.

When asked to comment why the trade balance was unfavourable to Pakistan, Mr Khalid said Pakistan was suffering from the crisis of creditability in the UK and Middle East markets. While India and Bangladesh are doing well in the UK market, Pakistan has lost creditability due mainly to its failure to conform to the required standard and fulfil contractual obligation. These areas, he suggested, be streamlined and improved in order to gain market in the United Kingdom offering good prospects and potentials.

About the one-window operation devised to facilitate finalisation of investment procedures, Mr Khalid commented it was yet to be implemented as the investors were still required to go through time consuming process for finalisation and sanctioning of projects.

He felt there was lack of co-ordination among various departments which needed to be streamlined.

CSO: 4600/305

THREE PUBLIC SECTOR INDUSTRIES MAY BE DISINVESTED

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 19 Jan 84 pp 1, 8

[Text] Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Dr. Mahbubul Haq hinted at the possibility of disinvestment of shares of public sector projects through stock exchange to broaden the ownership of these projects.

As a first step, the Government might disinvest some of the shares of three public sector industries namely ghee, cement, Pakistan Automobile Corporation (PACO) through stock exchange. While doing so the Government would retain the control of these industries by holding 51 shares.

Addressing the board of directors of Karachi Stock Exchange here yesterday the Planning Minister said while it was not possible to effect wholesale denationalisation of the taken over industries, the Government was seriously considering to offer some of the shares of these industries to the general public through stock exchange to avoid criticism of handing over shares to few families. This he felt would help the stock exchange to function as honest broker for the mobilisation of savings for investment.

The Planning Minister saw a bright future for private investment companies.

He said the debate on denationalisation is not making any head way as the Government was not willing to denationalise the profitable units while the private investors are equally not prepared to buy losing and weak projects. He said the Government was not prepared to dispose of losing units at throw-away prices.

Another reason for not doing largescale denationalisation was strong opposition of the labour who fear that after transfer of these industries into private hands surplus staff would be thrown out of jobs. With a view to ending this stalemate the Government was trying to find out a pragmatic solution.

APP adds:

Assuring the directors that their suggestions would receive serious consideration in the formulation of Budget for the next fiscal year, Dr. Mahbubul Haq said that the stock exchange could play greater role in the mobilisation of savings during the current plan. he said that it would be the common concern as how to divert the savings into productive channels.

He said that public ventures should be increasingly taken to the stock exchange to broaden the capital.

Noting the good deal of public offerings to floatations, the Minister said that major problem faced by the stock exchange is that it lacked suitable scrips to mobilise savings.

As regards de-regulation, the Minister said that country's economy remained regulated for 35 years. But he said that during last 18 months, there had been reduction in regulations. He said that at least five major steps have been taken, including the relaxation of import restrictions, enlargement of free list, abolition of 'P' form, de-rationing of sugar and incentives for investment, in the last Budget. Closed sectors had been opened up to private sector. Private schools have been allowed.

He said that private sector could now participate in the construction of national highways. He disclosed that the double carriage-way road from Peshawar to Karachi project would come up before the cabinet next month.

Concluding the Minister voiced his optimism about the industrial future of the country. The optimism, he said, was based on hard facts and hoped that the countrymen would also share the optimism in due course.

Earlier, the President of the Karachi Stock Exchange, Mr Abdul Aziz Patel in his welcome address spotlighted three areas which needed attention. These were (1) to increase savings in the public sector which could be had by curbing the current expenditure: (2) to accelerate savings further in the private sector and to take suitable steps towards mobilising and utilising national and domestic savings in productive sectors of Pakistan's economy.

He proposed for fine-blend of policy and execution package which binds Government and business as partners in future progress. He urged the Government to associate the stock market in its efforts for mobilisation of resources to make the Sixth Plan a success.

CSO: 4600/305

ONION CRISIS PROMPTS ENQUIRY INTO AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BODY AFFAIRS

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 23 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] ISLAMABAD, Jan. 22--A high-level enquiry committee headed by the Finance Secretary, Mr H. U. Baig, has started a probe into the financial affairs of the Agricultural Marketing and Storage Limited (AMSL), it was learnt here today.

The AMSL was established during 1982 by the Government to stabilise the market prices of perishable commodities as well as providing reasonable return of the produce to the farmers.

AMSL was functioning as a subsidiary of the Federal Bank for Cooperatives with an initial capital of Rs. 100 million.

According to information available, the AMSL was directed by the Government to purchase onions and potatoes from the farmers to give them support price of their produce. The Economic Coordination Committee, which met under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Ghulam Ishaq Khan on January 11, 1983, had directed the AMSL to procure onions from the growers to supply it to the consumers at the appropriate time. But the AMSL failed to purchase the commodity and consequently the consumers were hit hard during the recent onion crisis.

The AMSL procured 64,000 tonnes of potatoes last year, at a cost of a little less than Rs. 7 crore. It records that 24,000 tonnes of the commodity perished, with the result that it could not be exported and was thrown into the sea.

The concern received orders from Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, for the export of potatoes, but it failed to meet the demand of 25,000 tonnes and supplied only 5,000 tonnes.

The accounts of the concern were being scrutinised by the committee. Meanwhile, the General Manager of AMSL was relieved of his duty and the Managing Director, Federal Bank for Cooperatives, has assumed the responsibilities.

CSO: 4600/306

IRAN EXPRESSES INTEREST IN BUYING MORE SUGAR

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 23 Jan 84 p 3

[Text]

Mr Majid Sarehi, the Iranian Central Bank Chief and member of purchase commission has appreciated the efficient handling of shipment of sugar from Pakistan to Iran, by the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP).

Impressed with the performance of the TCP, Mr Majid Sarehi, who had a meeting with the Chairman TCP, Mr Mohammed Yusuf, here, on Saturday suggested to make TCP the handling agent for all goods which Iran is buying from Pakistan so as to ensure quality of goods, adherence to delivery schedule besides smooth transportation of the goods.

It may be mentioned here that Pakistan is exporting about 50,000 tons of sugar to Iran under an agreement signed between the two countries in February last year following a visit to Iran of a high-powered delegation led by the Finance Minister, Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

TCP has so far shipped 14,000 tons sugar by sea and 1,000 tons by rail and the entire delivery is expected to be completed by April.

Mr Majid Sarehi, who is also a member of the purchase com-

mission of Iran expressed the desire to buy an additional 20,000 tons sugar from Pakistan for which a decision will be taken on his return to Iran.

He proposed to have a long-term contract with the TCP for which negotiations were expected to be held some time by the end of March or early April.

Mr Majid Sarehi also proposed a long-term agreement between the GTC and TCP for the promotion of trade between the two countries, and processing the requirements of GTC by the TCP.

The GTC is buying maize, barley, fish meal and some cloth from Pakistan. He also proposed in having TCP to act as a coordinating agency in all purchases made by agencies other than the GTC.

He also proposed that Iran could purchase surplus citrus fruit and banana from Pakistan under a special arrangement against the export of apple and pistachio from Iran to Pakistan.

According to informed sources Iran has a demand for 50,000 tons of kinnu and 10,000 tons of banana.

Mr Sarehi is here along with the Iranian trade team currently visiting Pakistan.

RECORD SUGAR SURPLUS EXPECTED

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 25 Jan 84 p 5

[Text] ISLAMABAD, Jan 24--The country is expected to have a record surplus sugar stocks by the end of the current crushing season.

According to the estimates the highest ever stipulated production target will be achieved. Up to Jan 14 last the sugar mills of the country had produced more than 5 lakh tonnes of sugar, the crushing season will continue till the end of April during which experts are of the view over 5 lakh tonnes more will be produced, exceeding the last year's production of 1 lakh tonnes.

Experts attributed the bumper sugar-cane crop to the responsive weather, timely rains increased use of fertilizer and progressive agricultural practices in addition to the measures adopted by the sugar mills for harvesting a better sugar-cane crop.

The monsoon rains which badly damaged the cotton crop helped increase the per acre yield of sugar-cane, despite a decrease of land under the crop as compared to the last year. The sugar-cane production has shown an average increase of seven per cent in the country.

The Government is seriously considering the problem of storing the expected huge stocks of sugar, while arrangements were under way to export the surplus stocks. The country has finalised a deal of exporting 140,000 tonnes of sugar to Iran recently.

The scope of export of sugar to the Middle East countries is being explored by concerned official agencies.

The current price of sugar in the international market is 310 dollars per ton.

The Government has decided to subsidize the export price sharing it 50 per cent with the sugar mill-owners to offer them better opportunities to compete in international market.

CSO: 4600/306

EDIBLE OIL: PAKISTAN SEEKS EXPORT CREDIT

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 25 Jan 84 p 8

[Text] WASHINGTON, Jan. 24--Pakistan has secured a credit of 30 million dollars for the purchase of edible oil and is said to be exploring the possibility of obtaining another 30 million dollars from the U.S. Commodity Credit Corporation.

Last year Pakistan won a credit of 60 million dollars but needed draw upon only half. This year, the damage to the cotton crop has necessitated the import of an additional 30 million dollars worth of cottonseed oil.

This export credit guarantee programme, officially called "G.S.M. 102 programme" of the US Department of Agriculture, is designed to meet Pakistan's requirements of edible oil over and above what it imports under the annual PL-480 allocation of 50 million dollars.

The funding for fiscal 1984 has already been provided and a formal agreement is due to be signed in Islamabad any day.

US Surpluses

Our special correspondent Ghani Erabi points out that while both programmes are intended to ease America's farm surpluses by exports to the Third World, the supply situation is somewhat tight this season because of cutback in the production of soyabeans under the US administration's "PIC" programme under which farmers receive compensation from the Government for not cultivating their lands, the tight market position is reflected in the price trend instead of moving slowly over the year from 450 dollars to 700 dollars per metric ton, soyabean oil is already selling at 730 dollars per metric ton.

Another complicating factor is the abnormal rise in the price of palm oil which is currently selling at 1100 dollars per metric ton. This is ascribed to damage to the crop in Malaysia by pest.

Be that as it may the procurement of Soyabean, cottonseed, linseed, peanut and sunflower oil under the 30 million dollar Export credit Guarantee Programme is under way, all shipments are supposed to be completed by Sept. 30.

USSR TO HOLD TWO EXHIBITS

Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 25 Jan 84 p 8

[Text] The Soviet Union will organise two exhibitions in Karachi, namely, Business Information exhibition to be held in March and another show to be organised in May relating to Soviet machinery equipment and technology.

This was disclosed here yesterday by Mr Nikolov V. Masuvok, Trade Representative of the USSR in Pakistan-based in Islamabad, during his visit to the office of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The object of the exhibitions is to demonstrate information about Soviet technology and Soviet ability to meet Pakistan's needs.

In the field of trade, he said the Soviet side was preparing a draft protocol for barter trade between USSR and Pakistan for 1984 which will be discussed with Pakistani officials who will visit Moscow for this purpose. He sought the cooperation of FPCCI in enlarging the scope of protocol vis-a-vis list of items.

Earlier, welcoming the Soviet Trade Representative in the Federation, Mr Saifullah Khan Paracha, President of FPCCI, officially invited the USSR to participate in the Pakistan Trade Fair (PIFT-84) being organised by the Federation in Karachi in September this year.

He also assured all cooperation from the Federation for organising Soviet exhibitions in Karachi.

Mr Paracha said there existed big scope for cooperation and collaboration between Pakistan and the USSR. He asked the Soviet Union to consider import of any from Pakistan either in the shape of boulders or slabs to beautify buildings in USSR.

CSO: 4600/306

BRIEFS

EDIBLE OIL CORPORATION SOON--HYDERABAD, Jan. 20--Vice-Admiral Mohammad Fazil Janjua, the Federal Food and Agricultural Minister, said here yesterday that an edible oil Development Corporation will be set up soon. Talking to newsmen here at the Circuit House at the end of his three-day visit to various agricultural establishments in Hyderabad Division, the Minister said that the corporation will among other things concentrate on ensuring maximum production of edible oil so as to reduce dependence on its import and save foreign exchange. The corporation when formed will coordinate its working with the provincial governments for the realisation of its objective at the earliest. He said the corporation will explore the possibilities of cultivation of sunflower and rapeseed by providing attractive incentives to the farmers. [Excerpt] [Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 21 Jan 84 p 1]

COMPUTERIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL DATA--LAHORE, Jan. 22--Denmark has offered Pakistan a grant of 150 million US dollars for computerisation of agricultural data. This was disclosed here today by the Managing Director, Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) Maj-Gen. Mohammad Akram, while talking to a World Bank delegation which called on him at his office. The delegation is here to appraise the IBRD-assisted Pakistan Grain Storage project. The IBRD gave Pakistan assistance worth about US 60 million dollars for construction of 54 storage godowns. The PASSCO M.D. said creation of facilitation for bulk harvesting, transportation and storage as suggested by Denmark, would reduce the cost of production and increase the income of farmers at least by 25 per cent. The IBRD delegation liked the idea and termed it a step in the right direction. The PASSCO chief said the Danish grant would bear no interest and repayment will start after 15 years. [Excerpt] [Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 23 Jan 84 p 5]

TRADE TEAM TO FRANKFURT--A 10-member Pakistan trade delegation left Karachi to Frankfurt yesterday on a 18-day visit to EEC countries to explore markets for Pakistan engineering goods. The delegation, which has been sponsored by the Export Promotion Bureau in collaboration with the European Economic Community will visit Federal Germany, Britain and France. It will also explore the possibility of joint ventures and sub-contracting. The Export Promotion Bureau is also sending two delegations by the end of next month to the Gulf and Far Eastern countries to promote export of a wide range of Pakistani products. [Text] [Karachi MORNING NEWS in English 25 Jan 84 p 3]

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